This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

THE

WORDS OF THE LORD JESUS.

BY

RUDOLF STIER,

DOCTOR OF THEOLOGY, CHIEF PASTOR AND SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHKEUDITZ.

VOLUME THIRD.

TRANSLATED FROM THE SECOND REVISED AND ENLARGED GERMAN EDITION.

BY THE

REV. WILLIAM B. POPE,

MANCHESTER.

NEW EDITION.

PHILADELPHIA:

SMITH, ENGLISH, AND CO.

NEW YORK: SHELDON & CO. BOSTON: GOULD & LINCOLN.

MDCCCLIX.

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google

CONTENTS OF VOLUME THIRD.

	Page
Of Divorce, Celibacy, and the Coming of the Little Children, Matt. xix. 4–14; Mark x. 3–16; Luke xviii. 16, 17,	1
On following Jesus, and the Renunciation belonging thereto. (The Rich Young Man and the Labourers in the Vineyard.) Matt. xix. 17–xx. 16; Mark 18–31; Luke xviii. 18–30,	22
Third Announcement of Suffering: Answer to the Sons of Zebedee, Matt. xx. 18–28; Mark x. 33–45; Luke xviii. 31–33,	62
The Two Blind Men at Jericho (Matt. xx. 32; Mark x. 51, 52; Luke xviii. 41, 42),	82
Christ sends for the Asses, Matt. xxi. 2, 3; Mark xi. 2, 3; Luke xix. 30, 31,	84
The Den of Robbers, and the Children's Praise, Matt. xxi. 13–16; Mark xi. 17; Luke xix. 46,	97
The Fig-Tree: The Power of Faith and Prayer, Matt. xxi. 19–22; Mark xi. 14, 22, 26,	97
Christ's Answer respecting His authority to the wilfully Ignorant: The Baptism of John: The Two Sons: The Wicked Husbandman: The Corner-Stone, Matt. xxi. 24–44; Mark ix. 29–xii. 11; Luke xx. 3–18,	105
The Marriage of the King's Son, Matt. xxii. 2–14,	131
Christ's Answer respecting the Tribute to Cæsar, Matt. xxii. 18–21; Mark xii. 15–17; Luke xx. 23–25,	145
Answer respecting the Resurrection, Matt. xxii. 29–32; Mark xii. 24–27; Luke xx. 34–38,	157
Answer to the Question which is the Great Commandment, Matt. xxii. 37–45; Mark xii. 29–37; Luke xx. 41–44,	176
Woe to the Pharisees: All Blood upon this Generation: Farewell to Jerusalem, Matt. xxiii. 2–39; Mark xii. 38–40; Luke xx. 46, 47 (Luke xi. 39–52; xiii. 34, 35),	204
The Prophecy, Matt. xxiv. and xxv.,	244
The First Coming: Destruction of Jerusalem: Dispersion of Israel, Matt. xxiv. 2, 4–28; Mark xiii. 2, 5–23; Luke xxi. 6, 8–24,	251
The Middle Coming: Appearing of His Kingdom: Gathering together of the Elect, Matt. xxiv. 29–44; Mark xiii. 24–33; Luke xxi. 25–36,	279
First Parable: The Faithful and Wise Servant, Matt. xxiv. 45–51; Mark xiii. 34–37 (Luke xiv. 42–46),	300
Second Parable: The Wise Virgins, Matt. xxv. 1–13,	305
Third Parable: The Faithful Servants, Matt. xxv. 14–30 (Luke xix. 12–27),	318
Last Coming: General and Final Judgment, Matt. xxv. 31–46,	331

Hosted by Google

THE GOSPELS OF ST MARK AND ST LUKE.

Page

Preface, ... 345

THE GOSPEL OF ST MARK.

To the Unclean Spirit: Hold thy Peace, Mark i. 25; Luke iv. 35, . 375
To Preach in other Places also, Mark i. 38; Luke iv. 43, . . 378
The Sons of Thunder (The Little Ship ready), Mark iii. 17 (9), . 381
Parable: The Seed Growing of itself, Mark iv. 26–29, . . . 384
Ephphatha, and the Prohibition to speak of it, Mark vii. 34, 36, . 391
The Gradual Healing of the Blind Man, Mark viii. 23, 25, 26, . . 395
The True Greatness of the Disciples of Christ: The not following with us: the Fire and Salt prepared for self-denial, Mark ix. 33–50; Luke ix. 48–50 (Matt. xviii. 3–20), ... 397
The Widow's Mite, Mark xii. 43, 44; Luke xxi. 3, 4, . . . 424

THE GOSPEL OF ST LUKE.

The First Preaching in Nazareth, Luke iv. 17–27 (Matt. xiii. 57; Mark vi. 4), ... 429
Peter's Draught of Fishes and his Calling, Luke v. 4–10 (Matt. iv. 19; Mark i. 17), ... 451
The Raising to Life of the Young Man at Nain, Luke vii. 13, 14, . 454
The Woman who was a Sinner and Simon the Pharisee, Luke vii. 40–50, 458
Disowning of the Zeal of Elias. What Spirit should ye be of, Children? Luke ix. 55, 56, ... 474
Yet a Third Word to a Follower: About looking back, Luke ix. 62, . 480
The Sending Out of the Seventy, Luke x. 2–16, . . . 484
The Return of the Seventy: False and True Joy of the Disciples of the Lord, Luke x. 18–24, ... 488
What shall I do to inherit Eternal Life? The Compassionate Samaritan, Luke x. 26, 37, ... 498
Martha and Mary. One thing is needful, Luke x. 41, 42, . . 515
The Lord Teaches us to Pray, What and How: The Heavenly Friend and Father, Luke xi. 2–13 (Matt. vi. 9–13, vii. 7–11), 527

Hosted by Google

THE GOSPEL OF ST MATTHEW.

OF DIVORCE, CELIBACY, AND THE COMING OF THE LITTLE CHILDREN.

(Matt. xix. 4–14; Mark x. 3–16; Luke xviii. 16–17.)

THE incident here recorded belongs evidently to the close of that last journey to Jerusalem, of which St Luke gives so detailed an account, interweaving, at the same time, other things with it. But the same Evangelist, inasmuch as he has already, at chap. xvi. ver. 18, adduced an earlier repetition of Christ's principal saying on the subject of divorce, now only mentions the children who were brought to Him; this, however, evidently brings him into harmony with the other Evangelists. There is a considerable interval then between Matthew chap. xviii. and chap. xix.; for from chap. xix. onwards to xx. 17; xxi. 1, all is closely connected. To this interval must be assigned the raising of Lazarus, on the remarkable omission of which we shall speak in our interpretation of St John. The *departing from Galilee* and coming to Judea beyond Jordan,—in which St Matthew and St Mark agree,—corresponds, therefore, with what is said at John xi. 7; x. 40; comp. also here ver. 2 with John x. 41, 42. Probably St Matthew includes under *these sayings*, in the wider sense, the collective *sayings* of Christ *in Galilee* now completed; for he often thus thoughtfully sums up particulars in general statements: see, *e.g.*, at the very outset, chap. i. 1, the title to the genealogy, forming at the same time the title to the whole book. Not until after He had risen did Christ come again to Galilee.

The question of the Pharisees was, first of all, in an exegetical point of view, difficult; for, in the single passage of the law re-

Hosted by Google

lating to it, the עֶרְוַת דָּבָר might certainly be explained more strictly or more loosely, according to the diverse interests and feelings of the expositors. Hence, the very different interpretations that were given to it formed the two contending schools of R. Hillel and Schammai. The one which had become dominant allowed full scope to every caprice on the part of the man, as soon as his wife, from any cause whatever, was no longer to his mind:—so Sir. xxv. 26, *εἰ μὴ πορεύεται κατὰ χεῖρά σου.*[1] The other, urged by moral instincts, limited the Mosaic expression to gross faults, especially those connected with unchastity. Both schools were wrong. Schammai, although he meant well, yet wrongly inserted into the words of the law what they do not express; for although עֶרְוַת דָּבָר by itself (comp. with chap. xxiii. 15), indicates what is in some way shameful,—an important delinquency, not *πᾶσαν αἰτίαν*,[2] *every* cause,—still it is preceded by the quite general expression אִם־לֹא תִמְצָא־חֵן בְּעֵינָיו which can only mean: When she no longer pleases him, he may no longer love her and keep her. That this should only take place in the worst cases Moses evidently explains in the context. Yet he leaves to the feeling and conscience of the man (although the somewhat obscure expression of the law might bind and burden a pious, narrow conscience), the *liberty* of determining what such cases are; nay, in the *first* clause, he allows the widest scope to the dislike of the man. Hillel, on the other hand, who was exegetically right, fell into the serious fault of relaxing that proper aversion to divorce which proceeds from the entire *spirit* of the divine law. He abused the letter of the relaxation, which was outwardly just and right, so as to establish that what the law permitted, only on the presupposition of a sinful state of things, might be safely regarded as morally good. Such a controversy of the schools—in which, according to the original view of their founders, there was on the one side a certain right of unbiassed exegesis, but, on the other also, a certain right of moral feeling; and in both no proper understanding of what the law meant—

[1] "If she go not as thou wouldst have her." It is said expressly in the Tract. Gittin fol. 90: "Even if she had only oversalted his soup;"—nay, with shameless license: "Even if he should find a fairer one in whom he has more pleasure!" The repeated rule in the Talmud runs: *Hillel* looses what *Schammai* binds.

[2] Or as Joseph. Ant. iv. 8, 23. *καθ' ἅς δηποτοῦν αἰτίας.*

Hosted by Google

had naturally become a party quarrel: and the design of the Pharisees is, that Christ should take a side in this strife of the schools. This is the captious element in their *tempting* question. He must break with the one party or the other. If He sides with Schammai, then He makes Himself an object of hatred to the frivolous multitude, and may be called in question by the governor, Herod (who had sinned in this way).[1] But if He takes part with Hillel, He brings Himself into collision with the more seriously disposed of the people, if not into contradiction with His own well-known usual strictness in interpreting the law. His words in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 31, 32) —which were in precise contradiction to the law of Moses, as then understood—perhaps, also, the repetition of these in the denunciation of Luke xvi. 17, 18, had called forth this new question. The fools are for entangling Him in the letter of Moses, whose spirit they had missed in their disputation. They come slyly enough with the general question, saying not a word of the passage in Moses, or of Hillel and Schammai; but keeping all this cunningly in reserve. In the form of their question, however, "*Is it lawful?*" the truth, by no means unknown to the conscience of the questioners, betrays itself in the very first word, unconsciously and against their will. That *Moses* allowed it is indeed plainly written, as Hillel rightly read it; but that it was not therefore right and lawful before God was testified not merely by the feeling which sought another interpretation, but also by the very form in which these malicious interrogators put their question. "Man is inclined to license:" —that is true, therefore he is ever fond of asking, Is not this or that also lawful? But when he thus asks, and would have Yes for answer, he has already uttered, in most cases, the No in his conscience. The erring doctrine and practice of human statute moves in the sphere of the lawful or not lawful; whoever enters upon this, will always give offence on one side or the other. But the wisdom of Christ, rising above this entire sphere, enters upon it only so far as to disclose the original ground of Divine ordinances in relation to sinful man, and to demonstrate it with in-

[1] To what a length the laxity of morals had gone at that time we may see in Josephus. He coolly tells of himself, that his first wife left him, whilst the second, although the mother of three children, he put away, in order to take the third.

Hosted by Google

controvertible simplicity, and with irresistible clearness, by the accordant testimony of *nature* and *Scripture*. Thus does He answer the captious question,—which is of more importance for all mankind than the tempters were aware of,—with a supreme decision, always and everywhere valid, reaching far beyond the law of Moses, and yet only leading back to the original history of the same Moses;—a decision, in the right understanding of which, the entire doctrine concerning marriage in all its aspects and relations develops itself.

There is a plain connection in what St Matthew narrates as far as to ver. 15. In strict harmony with the answer given to the question of the Pharisees stands, according to Christ's own design, the further *esoteric* explanation respecting the state of celibacy—an explanation occasioned by the doubts of the disciples. But even the blessing pronounced upon the little children must also, according to the Father's wondrous arrangement of events, follow precisely now. Thus the utterances of the Son upon earth are made complete; and every possible misunderstanding of what had just been said about marriage is obviated by His loving recognition and benediction of children, who are themselves indeed God's continual blessing upon marriage.

Vers. 4–6. St Mark having once more lost the proper order and succession of the discourse (as we have already found to be frequently the case with him; for example, in the sayings against human statutes and lip-service), we adhere entirely to St Matthew. Our Lord goes back at once to the ground and origin of the marriage relation according to the first creation. He leaves the new, supreme decision respecting all irregularities that may intervene, respecting all laws that condescend to such cases, to be expressed by God, whom He here calls with emphasis ὁ ποιήσας—for which in Mark there is only ὁ θεός. Thus does He teach us in general, in every similar controversy, to ascend to its origin, to find the true restoration of every human relation that has been disturbed by sin, there where its first roots and beginnings lie. But where are we to find these; where do they lie disclosed to our view? As if there were no *Scripture* which testifies of the beginning and end! *Have ye not read?* There where alone we can read of these things; where Moses, by the Spirit of God, has written an account of the beginning of the world and of man. What an undeniable attestation have

Hosted by Google

we here against all the confusion of the present criticism of the Pentateuch and the Genesis, from the mouth of Christ, the Fulfiller of all revelation, the Restorer of all disturbed order and forgotten truth, the Critic of all human doctrine that falsely interprets the Word:—an attestation not only of the fact that Moses wrote the five books (which is here between question and answer self-evident; in Mark ver. 5, *Moses wrote*), but that in the first book he actually writes of the *first* creation! Ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, which belongs as well to ὁ ποιήσας as to ἐποίησεν αὐτούς (Mark ἀπὸ δὲ ἀρχῆς κτίσεως, *i.e.*, the creation of the world in general, and the creation of man in particular, from the beginning also of the human creature), significantly corresponds to the בְּרֵאשִׁית of Moses, and assures us that in those first chapters, which now indeed few can or will *read*, the beginning and roots of things as they proceeded from the Creator are truly to be found. Alas! how far is our present groping and presumptuous science from going back, in all and in everything, to the first verse which is to be found concerning it in Moses! And how in the Uranienburg University in Solyma—"with the clock and the great bell on the beautiful high hill"[1]—will the inquiries and controversies of men respecting geology and anthropology square with the *Genesis* already written with the pen of God! We are here further taught, in our interpretation of Scripture, to explain the particular parts by the whole, the later by the earlier, the law by the history, the law of Moses by the primitive history of Moses. In order to determine the import of the command respecting the bill of divorce our Lord here cites *two passages* from the first two chapters; and (taking for granted, of course, also the *unity* of the two chapters) brings these into strict connection. The former speaks of the first creation of the man, ere yet the woman was taken from the man, *constructed* (not created) out of his side. As we *read* in Moses the wondrously mysterious, yet not less literally clear, connection of unity and duality: בָּרָא אֹתוֹ—וַיִּבְרָא אֶת־הָאָדָם, He created *him*—and then again זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם, created He *them* (compare, for the complete interpretation of this, chap. v. 1, 2)—so and not otherwise does Christ speak, making use of the precise and correct render-

[1] Those who as Christians and theologians have the true longing for home have probably read Stilling's Heimweh.

Hosted by Google

ing of the LXX. in the neuter: ἄρσεν καὶ θῆλυ ἐποίησεν αὐτούς, not ἄνδρα καὶ γυναῖκα (*male and female;* not, *man and woman*). God made *man* in the beginning, certainly "not man-woman," as a theology and exegesis that rejects the mystery half truly protests; yet neither did He make them as two men, a man and a female-man; but as אָדָם, *i.e.*, as man, who as yet had the woman in himself, before the separation was made. Upon *this* original *unity* of the two[1] Christ now grafts the "therefore" in Adam's saying, and by a connection even closer than belongs to it as it there stands. Καὶ εἶπεν is not precisely an indefinite לֵאמֹר (as if what follows were further said by Adam with reference to this); but it really belongs also to ὁ ποιήσας ἀπ' ἀρχῆς. *God* spake by Adam, whose word already in so far became a γραφή, just as He spake by Sara, Gal. iv. 30, and others. But this is emphatically a saying of God, inasmuch as this first word of the awakening man is a prophecy respecting the new relation imparted by the Creator to his new consciousness, and belongs to what has just been done as a Divine explanation of it.[2] Thus does Adam prophesy for the then *future* of his race; he speaks less of himself than of those who are afterwards to be born as man or woman; for he speaks of *father* and *mother* ere yet he has learned by experience the meaning of these names. In every word of this saying there is involved some principle that regulates and determines this relation, which, however, is not now particularly mentioned by Christ, as the occasion did not require that it should. For example, the appointment of only one wife; in opposition to the unnatural caprice of Lamech, and also to the equally unnatural separation of man and wife (for God did not make two women to provide for the case of separation). It is here implicitly declared also that to the marriage relation belongs a sacredness superior to the sacred obligation of children to parents; consequently that to leave one's wife, to whom one should cleave, is a greater crime than to leave one's parents. Again, that while the man might at first take

[1] Which at all events (just as in Moses) lies in the expression. Unsatisfactory and only evasive is the translation: "as the man and as the woman" —even if (with Lange) it were more particularly explained: "the male and the female in their being for each other." Just as little are we at liberty at once to understand by the *cited* αὐτούς only the "human race."

[2] Deus utique per hominem dixit quod homo prophetando praedixit. Augustine de Nupt. ii. 4.

Hosted by Google

his sister to *wife*, he was at all events not at liberty to take his *mother*, and so on.

As it is agreeable to the object which Christ has here in view to stop at the last words—which He emphatically repeats as the ground of His inference,—He cites for further confirmation according to the LXX.; for it only has the *οἱ δύο*, as the Samar. Pentateuch the שְׁנֵיהֶם. This, although not in the genuine original text, is yet so evidently to be understood there, that Christ bases His entire doctrine upon this "two," to which prominence is given.[1] They are two, and yet *no longer two:* this is the shortest and profoundest expression of the mystery of marriage; that great mystery the further typical significance of which the Apostle Paul opens to us in Eph. v. 31, 32. *One flesh:* this Olshausen (and many others), with a good intention but erroneously, interprets thus: "not only ἓν πνεῦμα and μία ψυχή, but also σὰρξ μία; marriage in its ideal form appears as the union of the entire human being in love; it presupposes unity and concord of spirit and soul." No! that is marriage as humanly idealised, but by no means the real marriage which God has instituted, and will maintain inviolable. If this enthusiastic view of nuptial love were right, then that would be no true marriage where this unity is wanting; then indeed would the discovery of a want of "elective affinity" afford a valid ground of separation. The *bodily* fellowship is not merely the basis of *marriage*, but also that which is alone essential; it may indeed, and in a certain sense, should be sweetened and glorified by friendship of soul being superadded, but marriage subsists as such apart from that. Observe the distinction in 1 Cor. vi. 16, 17. *One flesh, i.e.*, one person, forming together one man, within the limits of this life in the flesh, for this world; beyond these limits the death of the flesh has separated the marriage tie. In this alone lies the justification of second marriages, which do no injury to the continuing spiritual fellowship of love with the partner who is gone.[2]

[1] We have not here, however, an argument for a *Greek* version of the Gospel of Matthew, which is as good as original, or for the fact that our Lord Himself spoke Greek; for Christ might with the same right as the LXX. derive the δύο from the context.

[2] Compare the doctrine of Rothe, which agrees with the above, Ethik iii. 638.

Hosted by Google

And now comes the great inference, which appears to be simply a repetition of the old word rightly read, and yet is made the sacred marriage formula of the new Church. God has *joined together* man and wife, in the first unity and *beginning* of the *man*, who was *male and female;* and *therefore*, again, in the *resolving back*—as declared by the man—of those who are now two into the original unity. Here consequently is applied in the most important case a *general* proposition, the applications of which to cases of every kind are inexhaustible, viz.: That which in general, and in any way, God hath united, let not man in capricious innovation of God's primitive and natural law put asunder! God indeed also separates again: as (for reasons regarding which we are here silent in order not to provoke dispute) He took the woman out of the man; and as He now dissolves marriages by death. What man joins together unjustly, that, moreover, the judging and saving God separates; but what the sin of man has separated, that He can and will join again together.—Ἄνθρωπος μὴ χωριζέτω, Let not *man* put asunder: this is the answer to the question, *Is it lawful for man?*—The result, then, of this first answer is: *Properly there should be* no separation;[1] as there should not be that sin, and that hatred from which alone *the bill of divorce* and *finding no favour* can proceed; there should be no separation, as not by adultery, so not by hindering and prohibiting marriage where God will have it. But indeed, before the second question of the Pharisees calls forth the second answer of Christ respecting the *permission* of separation, the reasonable difficulty suggests itself, Whether all marriages that have been actually contracted, and are admitted as real, are to be regarded as the joining together of God? Here the strict word of our Lord leaves room for many considerations, which may be justified elsewhere from the word of truth. Even the strict Evangelische Kirchenzeitung (June 1843) itself says: "Marriages are concluded in heaven;—now, however, mostly on the low earth, and often still deeper." How then, if any one were precisely to invert the word of Christ, and to maintain that, *because God* has not joined together all that passes under the name of marriage, therefore divorces are to be allowed? Some time ago, the

[1] For it is contrary to nature, as Chrysostom said: παρὰ φύσιν τὸ γινόμενον, ὅτι μία διατέμνεται σάρξ.

Hosted by Google

discussion of the new Prussian law of marriage tended to impress upon all the important truth, that a law of marriage should first purify and as much as possible vindicate the sanctity of the marriage contract, before it carelessly confirms every marriage that is contracted. Certainly *man also should not* join together without God; this the marriage ceremony expresses, but only shadows it forth, however, *without its being on every occasion a truth.* To speak again with the Kirchenzeitung: "Is it less culpable when a minister *at once* pronounces the marriage ceremony upon those, of whom he is convinced that in heart they break the marriage-vow at the moment they are taking it upon them, than it would be to throw away the blessing of the Church in the marriage of persons who are separated contrary to the Church?" But we ask further: Is it possible so to try the heart, in all cases, as that, even in the best condition of Christian states and national churches, no marriages should receive the form of Divine confirmation, which were already null and void from the first? One sees how Christ could not possibly have expressed His sublime law in such a manner as to be rigidly maintained in its application to the outward sinful reality.

The first question—which, with the design to "tempt," points to the passage in the law of Moses, without precisely naming it, and asks, "How understandest *Thou* this, what is Thy interpretation?"—our Lord so answers as to pierce their conscience, that very conscience which, notwithstanding the plainly prescribed permission, could yet not forbear asking—"Is it lawful?" How great His condescension! Instead of laying bare and condemning the hostile purpose of the tempters, in the question which was *now* in the first place addressed *to Him*, He rather grafts His answer on the secret acknowledgment of the truth which the important question, viewed as the question of man in general, implies, namely, "It is not lawful." This, however, He confirms by appealing to the original appointment of God, according to the Scripture; as already expressed in the creation from the beginning, before the taking of the woman out of the man, and then in the first prophecy of the man, respecting the unity of flesh, which continues to subsist in the duality. He has thereby very unexpectedly risen far above the disputed passage of the law taken by itself; this is inconvenient for the inquirers and perplexes them. They must then, if they would not be at once

Hosted by Google

driven back, resolve to speak out more pointedly and pressingly. Since Christ, going further even than Schammai, will allow no reasons of divorce to be valid, they, after the manner of malicious disputants, naturally leap at once to the other side: Wherefore, then (if it be as Thou sayest), did Moses command to give a bill of divorce, and to put her away? That is, Wherefore did he *command*, and require nothing more than, this form, in order to put her away? Or, How then could Moses prescribe illegal forms for things which are against God's ordinance?

Vers. 8, 9. The second answer, still more unexpected than the first, although to the upright conscience long since present and obvious, now puts them to shame, and administers befitting rebuke: "What you call *command* is only *permission*, and that, on account of the hardness of men's hearts, against the ordinance of God from the beginning. That ordinance I am come through grace to restore; and therefore I now declare and ordain, without contradiction to Moses, what you already know (from the Sermon on the Mount) as My marriage-law." Our Lord, in the first place, interprets those disputed expressions of Moses which, as specifying the *cause of divorce*, must be supposed to be in the background of the whole transaction, really in the same way as *Hillel;* for He admits that Moses has permitted divorce in general, apparently almost *for every cause*. But He rejects, at the same time, the acceptation of this entire ἐντολή of Moses (Mark, ver. 5) as a *commandment;* and maintains another reading and construction of the whole clause, just as it also stands in our German Bibles. If we read the original text (Deut. xxiv.) correctly, we shall find that the whole of vers. 1–3 forms what we may call the *premiss*, or preamble, consisting of presupposed and at that time acknowledged circumstances and events, and that only ver. 4 contains the *conclusion*, or statement, of the *law* properly so called.[1] Moses admits the long existing practice of divorce, and the bill of divorcement, to be valid in the same way as blood-revenge, and many other customs which then obtained; he does not properly speaking or-

[1] To which Michaelis rightly directs attention Mos. Recht ii. § 119. For if the law begins already at וְשָׂנֵא לָהּ, then would it further be *commanded:* She shall marry another man, who shall hate her, and also send her away, etc. Rather does the אוֹ כִּי יָמוּת show plainly that the preamble of the supposed case extends as far as to this point.

Hosted by Google

dain the bill of divorce, but only confirms it by expressly mentioning that it must not, as heretofore, be wanting; he adds, however, the highly necessary limitation of the custom, that at least the abomination of running back from a second husband again to the first is not to be permitted. For the rest, he *permits it to be done*, and takes meanwhile under his legislative care what in the Old Testament was not to be changed without causing greater evil.[1] Σκληροκαρδία, the adjective of which occurs Ezek. iii. 7 (LXX. πᾶς ὁ οἶκος Ἰσραὴλ φιλόνεικοί εἰσι καὶ σκληροκάρδιοι, קְשֵׁי לֵב) is found in Deut. x. 16, LXX. for עָרְלַת לְבַבְכֶם, where the *circumcision of the heart* is spoken of:—we know in what sense Moses speaks of this, and prophesies for the future of a new covenant. (Comp. also Deut. ix. 27, σκληρότητα τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, קְשִׁי הָעָם הַזֶּה, and the קְשֵׁה עֹרֶף elsewhere so often said of Israel). All these passages Christ brings to mind, in order that the lawgiver may be explained from his own words. When He three times repeats with emphasis ὑμῶν, ὑμῖν, ὑμῶν (the hardness of *your* hearts, *your* wives), He thereby intimates, in a manner not to be overlooked, the particular and temporary character of the permissive ordinance, as precisely for such a hardhearted people, in opposition to the ἄνθρωπος, the *man*, vers. 4–6. Moses, indeed, although Christ purposely mentions only him, rightly permitted this, not arbitrarily as man, but in virtue of a *commission from God*.[2] "A law which Moses has given cannot be sinful"—what Moses has allowed, the governor of a country may now permit without sin;—"the subjects sin when they avail themselves of the permission, but he is as it were protected by the example of God and of Moses, and sins not when he grants permission to them for the prevention of a greater evil." (Michaelis Mos. Recht i. § 2.) Much is permitted by the State, and *must*

[1] On a right consideration of this whole subject there would result, in the case of a still lower degree of corruption (such indeed as now exists to the shame of Christendom), an answer respecting the present brothel-question, not corresponding to the most *rigorous* view, but somewhat as Wichern states it. Here, of course, only for the magistrate or police; not for the Church, the Church of the New Testament. Compare besides such laws as Deut. xxi. 10, ss.; Ex. xxi. 9, 10 (Michaelis Mos. R. § 87). How far did *God's* police at that time condescend for the Jews!

[2] Origen very wrongly found here what he regarded as a significant distinction between *God's* command, and *Moses'* permission yielding to the hardness of heart.

Hosted by Google

even be permitted by the *Church*, although in the eye of conscience it be wrong, although the *word* of Christ preached in the Church may testify against it.[1] When the Apostle in 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11, adduces the saying of Christ, he represents Him, in the words ἐὰν δὲ καὶ χωρισθῇ (quite similarly to the Mosaic phrase), as taking for granted the possible occurrence of such unhappy cases even among Christians, precisely in the same way as here (ver. 9). A forcible hindrance of separation, in the name of Christ and by commission from Him for His Church, cannot be what is here spoken of. It is enough that He designates all divorce in general as proceeding from sin, and against God's ordinance (which sooner or later conscience makes known to all who avail themselves of the permission). Enough, that He acknowledges only the πορνεία,—*i.e.*, however, every unfaithfulness performed and consummated by the entire person, and essentially annulling marriage, be it in a work, or lust of the flesh,[2]—as justifying the divorce of those who are already in reality divorced. Enough, that in all other cases He forbids, for all who will hear Him in the spirit of free obedience, marriage with another woman as adultery, on account of that which is still valid. On all this, —how far it reaches, and how far it is not for outward legislation,—we have already expressed our views in our interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount. It remains only to be observed, that while here the λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν certainly stands parallel to the foregoing ὑμῖν in connection with the permission granted by Moses, and addresses the *Pharisees* (differently from the ὑμῖν addressed to the μαθηταὶ in the Sermon on the Mount), it yet does not imply that the commandment of our Lord is actually to take the place of the permissive legislation of Moses. For we are evidently to understand and supply: I say unto you, *if*

[1] This goes beyond the mere permission of "magisterial" authority, as V. Gerlach thus softens it. Nay, much more is permitted than he allows, when, ingeniously explaining the words of Luther to this effect, he is for "rejecting all divorced persons from the fellowship of the Christian Church."

[2] How then if the one partner had for years secretly maintained a refined sensual intercourse with a third person, although without concubitus? Would this in the judgment of Jesus be no πορνεία, no adultery? There is much wanting to prove the assertion (on which V. Gerlach lays so much stress), that in the mouth of Jesus πορνεία can throughout only unequivocally mean the "bodily act;" comp. what we said already at the Sermon on the Mount, Part i. p. 136.

Hosted by Google

ye ask Me, as at ver. 3, in the spirit of those who would hear My decision on the subject, and follow My word in regard to it. He thus answers the insincere question with all the earnestness of truth.

According to St Mark,—who does not accurately know and represent the *details* of the discourse with the Pharisees, but does not on that account misstate its *import*,—*the disciples* again privately questioned Christ on the matter. This corresponds with what St Matthew relates of a subsequent objection and doubt on the part of the disciples. It is not, however, to be supposed that St Mark has put erroneously the repetition of the prohibition of divorce in place of the other esoteric saying about castrating; it is quite possible that both may consist with each other.[1] Before that happened which St Matthew relates, it was very natural that the question should be further asked: *Does the matter stand really thus?* Art Thou in perfect earnest in what Thou hast just said to the Pharisees? This St Mark, moreover, indicates in the words, "asked Him again of the same matter." This Evangelist, finally, has still another sentence peculiar to himself, which can hardly have been merely invented or have lost its proper place: And if a *wife shall put away* her husband. This happened sometimes, although (as Joseph. expressly explains, Antt. 15. 7. 10) not according to Jewish law, which, indeed, in many cases permitted an action on the part of the wife with a view to divorce, but by no means an arbitrary divorce or leaving of her husband, such as that of Salome who wrote a bill of divorce against Costobarus, or that of Herodias who left Herod Philip. When Christ thus mentions instances, as occurring in His own time, of a still worse caprice than was allowed by Moses (though allowed by Greek and Roman law), He will thereby indicate more strongly the results of hardness of heart, and thus set all the more sharply in opposition to all such conduct His own holy ordinance, for the keeping of which He also furnishes the necessary grace.

Vers. 11, 12. Hereupon the disciples are alarmed at the idea of an indissoluble union among sinful men,—not so much on their own account as on account of other people,—seeing that

[1] It is even possible that St Mark here, as generally, narrates with historical exactness;—although, upon other grounds pertaining to the internal connection, we do not believe this.

Hosted by Google

their Master had employed the universal "whosoever." They are right in this fear, which would rather not venture on incurring an obligation for the full discharge of which grace is necessary; but they forget, on the other hand, that to remain unmarried without sin requires a still larger measure of grace. Their frank declaration proceeding from the first strong impression is: If *the case of the man with his wife*[1] be so, it is *not good* to marry, as it appears to us! (Are not the Essenes with their celibacy after all in the right?) Our Lord, however, in His answer, points to the still worse evil of lustful desire, or fornication (1 Cor. vii. 1, 2, 9); since only a chaste celibacy can be pleasing to God, and profitable or better for man. He at the same time neglects not the occasion thus presented,—in order to the *completion* of His doctrine for all future disciples,—of giving its due merit and honour to *celibacy*. This He does in such a way as to point out the true and direct path of decision between the first utterance of God:—"It is not good for man to be alone"—and that special grace of the New Testament, already bestowed on the angelic state, which St Paul, 1 Cor. vii. 1, acknowledges as the truth corresponding to the ascetical error. He, first of all, explains that chaste celibacy is an *exception* to the general institution, and can therefore only be *given* through the will and power of God.[2] He then declares that such an exception can only be conceived of as *threefold*. First, in the case of such as are naturally and by birth disqualified, and which in the special case corresponds to the ἀρχὴ κτίσεως in the general; this, however, is only a rare circumstance, and constitutes, so to speak, a permission of the Creator. Secondly, in the case of those disqualified by the unnatural act of men (therefore forbidden by Moses, Deut. xxiii. 1; Lev. xxii. 24, to be done to men or beasts);

[1] Αἰτία is not with Meyer to be explained according to ver. 3: If there is only this single reason for divorce. The μετά will not agree with this. But quite correctly with Luther: The *matter* of the marriage covenant, namely in its ground, its first institution. Elsewhere also αἰτία has a signification equivalent to *ratio*, *conditio*;—here, therefore, the original law of the marriage-state. Hesych. τὰ κατ' ἀρχὴν πράγματα. Euthym. ἐὰν τοιαύτη ἐστὶν ἡ αἰτία τῆς συζυγίας.

[2] This idea seems to us to afford sufficient *connection* between the question and the answer; there is no necessity for Neander's difficulties, who says that, either the discourse has no such connection, or intermediate words have been left out.

Hosted by Google

which, however, also constitutes a permission of God, a Divine dispensation for those who have been thus dealt with. Finally (and this He means as the principal answer, which was to be explained by the two foregoing parallels), in the case of those who have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of Heaven's sake. He concludes, after having at the beginning repelled those who are not called to this, with a confirmation of this last case; a confirmation in which, while He strongly limits its operation, He yet truly acknowledges, nay, almost *requires it.*

All men cannot receive *this saying:* Christ certainly does *not* mean by "this saying" (as Wizenmann hastily supposes) His own prohibition of all divorce except in the case of fornication, that which, as He had just expressed it, had seemed so alarming to the disciples. This would yield, indeed, a very perverted sense. It would mean that the universal grace of the New Testament, for the restoration of all that has been disturbed by sin back to the pure ἀρχὴ κτίσεως, were *not given to all;* and as if *on that account* this new appointment of Christ could be required only of those who were specially chosen to keep it. No, our Lord does not here go back to His foregoing words; but He closely connects something new with the word which the disciples had used as the expression of their perplexity. *This*, and nothing else, He means by the τὸν λόγον τοῦτον, *this saying.* It is not His intention absolutely to contradict the disciples, who have spoken more truly than they themselves know; but rather to acknowledge that, in a certain case, a partial truth belongs to their rashly general proposition. The *saying* then is, "*it is not good to marry*"—which, upon other grounds, is in fact true as regards *some*, those, namely, who have the *gift* and the *calling* to abstain. (1 Cor. vii. 7–17.) That only thus we rightly understand it is clearly proved by the repetition at the conclusion: He that is able to receive it let him receive it! The carnal mind also shrinks from the restraints of marriage; but only that it may yield itself unrestrained to its lusts: than that nothing can be more evil. Only chaste celibacy can in certain circumstances be better than marriage; or, as Christ here expresses it: for the οὐ γαμῆσαι are required εὐνοῦχοι. Of these there are three kinds: as some are so *without*, and some *against* their own will, so there are others certainly who are so *with* their own will, yet only *according to* the will of God. It ought not to be overlooked

Hosted by Google

that, in the first two cases, the expression is indeed in the first place to be taken literally; but even in them it passes into a further meaning, so as to prepare the way for the non-literal continuation and application of it in the third case. A *eunuch from his mother's womb*[1] is not merely one who is born and constituted with a real natural defect in this respect; but also, in a certain measure, one who is destitute of the sexual desire that impels to marriage, so that chastity costs him no struggle, and is to him no victory. The *being made eunuchs* by other men[2] includes also the being restrained or kept back from marriage in the various ways in which this may be done; those cases in which such restraint finds easy obedience in accordance with God's providential arrangements. (Certainly not the unnaturally forced, and therefore all the more unchaste, celibacy of monks, soldiers, and so forth.) In so far as this intermediate case stands in the middle, between the foregoing and the following, it is either similar to the first or the third. Yet Christ essentially distinguishes the first and second as being irregular and wrong, from the third, which He Himself ordains and confirms, only however as a rare exception. For He has already acknowledged marriage as the ordinance of the Creator; He Himself called to be His first Apostle a married person; and His last chosen Apostle, although unmarried, not merely confirms in very earnest terms the general ordinance, but in particular speaks of cases (and these not of rare occurrence) in which, as the reverse of what Christ here says, it is rather required of a man that he *marry* for the kingdom of heaven's sake. Something to this effect lies certainly in 1 Tim. iii. 2; and this may find its application as well in reference to missionaries who seek, by means of female missionaries, to open a door for the Gospel to the wives and daughters of the heathen, as to the pastors of Christendom in town and country. Nay, one might say further, that for example a widower, who again gives a

[1] Such an one was said by the Jews to be castrated by the sun (one who has never otherwise seen the sun), or by the hand of Heaven.

[2] In Israel, as already said, unconditionally forbidden by Moses; therefore all the more common in the entire East. Hamann observes rightly for once: Self-castration for the sake of the kingdom of heaven (as afterwards follows) must have been a word which no Jewish head nor Jewish taste was in a condition to understand.

Hosted by Google

mother to his children *against* the felt want and inclination of his own heart; and, finally, that every one who cannot live chastely unmarried, and who enters into the married state in order to his sanctification, marries for the sake of Christ and His kingdom. As for those, however, who *have made themselves eunuchs, i.e.*, who by victorious conflict with the lust of the flesh have reached a state in which they feel it no longer (for Christ here denotes the end of a conflict which is indeed not so speedily accomplished, and graciously reckons it finished when it is only begun)—they have certainly done it *for the kingdom of heaven's sake.* He who undertakes it from other motives, in self-will, without the gift and calling of God, will not accomplish it, can never accomplish it. *This* experience testifies, even as our Lord here takes it for granted; for He recognises no fourth class consisting of those who from pride, avarice, or any other motive, might accomplish it. Even he who would deal with himself as Origen did would not thereby destroy the desire, which it is well known may still exist in those who have been bodily castrated. (Sir. xx. 3, xxx. 21.)

But what is here meant by "*for the kingdom of heaven's sake?*" We think our Lord comprehends in this expression two sorts of cases: the first, when any one renounces the state of marriage on account of an office, and for the sake of active labour for the kingdom of heaven, as was probably the case with St Paul; the second, and this is the most proper and immediate sense of the word, when any one feels in his experience before God that he himself can, and is to be, holy and happy, only in an unmarried state, and that this is *for him* the appointed way into the kingdom of heaven. In which case, therefore, it must always be acknowledged that Christ knows nothing and says nothing of a relatively greater value belonging to celibacy, or of a higher degree of holiness in it.[1] For, *the kingdom of heaven,* into which we are all in various ways to press, and the most of us in the state of marriage, is alone the object and end; while the refraining on the part of some is only the means to that end. Let every one see to it indeed that he

[1] On which Neander, who himself, as is well known, remained unmarried, notwithstanding speaks very truly; he not inaptly suggests that Christ elsewhere has found fault with the burying of the talent in order to preserve it more safely.

Hosted by Google

be not disobedient, if this means and this way has been appointed for him; let him not think that the δέδοται (*it is given*) must at once be realised, whenever he thinks so; but let him do his part in order to the acquisition of the gift held out to him, in the painful, gradual, perhaps in the life of the flesh never to be entirely accomplished, εὐνουχίζειν ἑαυτόν. And in so far our Lord says, last of all: Whoso finds that he can receive it, let him go on with earnestness and zeal! Which is certainly at the same time an evangelical counsel, a challenge addressed to all whom it concerns.

Nothing could more appropriately follow these sayings about marriage and celibacy than the requirement to acknowledge *children* also (with the blessing of grace) of the kingdom of heaven:—children as the fruit of wedlock, which, notwithstanding what has just been said, is yet always of course blessed of God. As what had just been said might easily be misunderstood by men inclined to ἐθελοθρησκεία, we see the counterworking wisdom of the Father—who *prepares* for the Son upon earth the course of His testimony as well as of His sacrifice—in causing that at this precise moment the children were brought to Jesus that He might bless them. St Luke, who has not preserved this important connection, points at least by the article in τὰ βρέφη to the typical, general significance of the incident: There were once brought to Him also *the* children; and thus did He receive them, these were His words concerning the children![1] It, moreover, certainly appears from the expression βρέφη, if it were not already implied in the προσφέρειν, that they were not even παιδία—as was the child (Matt xviii.) who was called and placed in the midst of the disciples,—but mere infants. (1 Pet. ii. 2; Acts vii. 19; Luke ii. 12–16, and even i. 41. On the other hand, ἀπὸ βρέφους, 2 Tim. iii. 15, is used only as a proverbially strong expression.) Our Lord was not desired to say anything to them, but merely to lay His hands on them, and pray over them; or, as the two

[1] One may even say here: Thus do *the children* ever come protestingly in our way, when we would be too severe against matrimony. Alford understands it only thus: *They* (the people) brought to Him also *their* children along with them. But this scarcely does justice to the context.

Hosted by Google

other Evangelists denote the retiring modesty of the request, to *touch* them. It was a praiseworthy faith on the part of the mothers who brought them (and whoever else the οἱ προσφέροντες, indefinitely named in Mark, may be) thus to expect, from the laying on of the hands of the holy man (according to ancient custom), a real blessing for those who were as yet incapable of receiving the word. The disciples, however, being thus interrupted in a very interesting conversation which they would fain have continued by further questioning, were displeased with the expectation, and harshly repel it as improper. "Do not overpower Him; He has more than enough to do with those who are grown up.[1] What good can such children get from His laying His hands upon *them?*" Thus "do they chide, with the gravity of young Rabbis, this interruption to a difficult inquiry of their profound school." (Lange.) Upon this Christ speaks the great word, which completes what He had previously taught regarding marriage; which rebukes all that proud contempt with which many would in after times look upon the fruit of blessed marriages; and which gives a new and more deeply-reaching commentary on all that had been said in Matt. xviii., and was here so soon forgotten by the disciples.

That the "*children*" and the "*such*" here, as at chap. xviii., are to be distinguished, and yet that the first certainly includes the second, we shall not undertake to prove anew; it is evidently implied in the connecting word *for*. In like manner, that the kingdom of heaven consists of such children, as also of child-like men,—not on account of their own original innocence, but through the saving grace in which they receive it as a gift and blessing,—is equally evident: "*If they come*, and come to *Me*, then of such is the kingdom of heaven." Children and child-like men, then, do not need to be made eunuchs in order to this. If the disciples, in a Pelagian spirit, take it for granted that man, through his own knowing and willing, believing and obeying, must meet the coming of the kingdom with something of his own,—Christ, while He does not indeed deny those commands to be found elsewhere, according to which a man must himself take and lay hold, must himself enter by force,

[1] It is, however, not necessary to suppose with Schleiermacher "that the children were all at once presented in a crowd and throng."

Hosted by Google

must struggle, strive, and persevere, yet sharply and clearly strips this of everything Pelagian. "Not, the children must first become as you; but, *vice versa*, you must become as the children." (Richter.) The saying, which is added in St Mark and St Luke, determines this in a simple measured expression: it remains grace and gift, for the attainment of which the *receiving*, *i.e.*, consequently the accepting it, is sufficient; nay, all that goes beyond such acceptance is already too much and a hindrance. In all the so-called co-operation of man there remains always the first and ever present *initiative* of God's working and giving; the more *passively*, in the true sense, man comes and takes, the better; and, at the end as at the beginning, he actually enters only by this pure passivity into the kingdom of heaven. Is not a child in the arms of its mother a living and personified call for help? "Receive me, I have nothing, I need everything, I too would fain find my little place upon earth!" Is it not a living expression of faith? "I reckon and trust that I shall not be left to perish without help!" It is, as it were, an embodied appeal to the faithfulness of the Creator, who does not forsake His work even though marred and corrupted (Is. xlv. 10, 11). As truly as God has let that child be born, so surely has He also prepared a salvation for it; it lives and smiles with a *fides implicita* in this salvation. *As* a child:—this, in reference to adults, is not being like a machine. For, as the child at least lets itself be carried and brought, and keeps itself quiet when caressed and blessed, so we, on our part, when brought to Christ or drawn to Him, must ourselves *come* and *receive;* and in so far as a counteractive tendency has been awakened in us, we have enough to do to overcome this, in order not to *keep away* from ourselves and from Christ. But all this again must be done in childlike simplicity, humility, sense of need, and childlike trust. If we have to do with men, then the true rule is: Be *no* child, trust, look to—whom? But if we have to do with God, then it cannot often enough be repeated: Be only a child—follow the call, trust to the promise, take the gift, obey the word, all as if thou didst let thyself be lifted, carried, comforted, blessed!

Fully warranted, then, against all unchildlike objection,—which does not understand the *receiving* of the kingdom of heaven,—is the use which the Church makes of this declaration and act

Hosted by Google

of her Lord as the institution of *infant baptism*. He who here *blesses* children, certainly with no empty and unmeaning ceremony, or merely to please the superstition of those who brought them (does He ever at any other time act thus?), gives also the greater blessing of baptism, which includes the whole kingdom of heaven, to those who are now brought to Him; and, just as here, reckons their being brought as a *coming*. For it is truly a coming, quite as sufficient as that of adults, who have also nothing to bring but themselves and their own sinful nature. If conscious sins have already proceeded from the sinful nature, then does *repentance* and *faith* belong to a true coming, then without both of these can no one be baptized; but a little child does not need repentance, and the grace in which we believe anticipates his faith, just as it does ours before it is present. Do we not all *receive* the grace, which we afterwards consciously experience, first unconsciously, as βρέφη, as embryos, so to speak, of the new birth?[1] He who afterwards *believes*, just as he has already been *baptized*, is saved; for he also who is baptized because he has believed, received in his faith already the first fruits of the grace of baptism sealed by the outward sacrament. We may therefore boldly say that infant baptism *alone* corresponds to the idea of the first sacrament, in so far as it is a giving and receiving on the part of God which goes before, lays the foundation, and is alone efficacious.[2] And if baptized children *die*, they are saved and blessed, before they could resist. If they die *unbaptized?* In that case also is fully warranted the use, only less general on account of unbelief, which the Church makes of the same saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me," in the hymns and funeral orations for consolation at the burial of children. He who lets them die bids them precisely thereby to *come to Him*, and will assuredly have the same blessing for them in the other world, which in this He does not withhold from them. At most, it might still be said, there remains a *difference* between receiving the grace of baptism (which gives all, and which washes away the sinful nature) in this world, and receiving it in the other world; a difference, *it may be supposed* (for

[1] For "all gifts of God do not enter by the door of the *understanding* into the soul." (Roos.) The first fundamental gift never!

[2] Upon which we have further expressed ourselves in the last part of this work, in the excursus on infant baptism.

Hosted by Google

who will say more on these secret things), which always leaves a preference to baptism in the flesh,—to be compared, at least in its first stage, with the important difference between adults who have attained to regeneration upon earth, and those who receive it in Hades. But this again, in reference to *little children*, seems not very conceivable.

ON FOLLOWING JESUS, AND THE RENUNCIATION BELONGING THERETO. (THE RICH YOUNG MAN AND THE LABOURERS IN THE VINEYARD.)

(Matt. xix. 17–xx. 16; Mark x. 18–31; Luke xviii. 18–30.)

So far all is again connected. The discourse of Christ progressively develops itself as circumstances give Him occasion: it, moreover, completes and supplements itself; here, as elsewhere, advancing from the exoteric to the esoteric in the parable intended for the disciples at the beginning of chap. xx.,—which *St Matthew*, alone of the Apostles and ear-witnesses, has preserved. Would that the critics of the first Gospel could be persuaded to seek, by patient inquiry and interpretation, to apprehend its relation to the two others,—particularly as regards the sayings of Christ,—in the way in which it is our aim to present it in this book! Then would the supposition, in other respects so natural, more and more commend itself, that the Church has put, and could only put, at the head of the New Testament canon, a reproduction *precisely* corresponding to the Aramaic original of the Apostle.[1]

The *following* of Jesus, and the *renunciation* which that requires, is the subject of the discourse upon which we now enter. The young man, rich in possessions and good works, who offers himself as a follower of Christ, and yet cannot make up his mind to the necessary conditions, affords occasion for showing that, in order to take the *first step* in following Christ, all riches and *possession* (what is outward to be understood as the expression

[1] We do not consent to Harless' "fabula de Matthaeo syro-chaldaice conscripto." With Guerike, we hold to the supposition of an Aramaic original; the translation of which,—not always *literal*, yet always an exact rendering,—was executed at all events under the authority of the Apostle, either by himself or by others.

Hosted by Google

and figure for what is inward) must be renounced. In order to complete this testimony, the question of Peter makes it necessary for our Lord to show that, in *continuing* to follow Him, there is required a further renunciation of all *eager seeking after reward*, of all self-willed striving after future possession, and of all views of compensation for what has been forsaken. The introductory conversation with the rich young man consists of three questions and their corresponding answers. The first question and answer contains only the *preparatory test* applied to him; in the second the test is more definitely applied; the third contains, on the other hand, the decisive *disclosure* of the real state of the case. To the first, partly improper, question (so far improper as it makes the attainment of life to depend upon *doing* in the false sense of merit) our Lord replies by a testing answer: Be it so! only seriously attempt it in this way, and keep the commandments of the good God concerning doing good! On the second question, in which he foolishly betrays himself, the more definitely testing answer presses more closely home: The old commandments with which thou art familiar—art thou then really perfect with these? And now, when the error of the young man comes to full expression (all these have I kept!), Christ also decisively discloses (although still *figuratively* proving him) what is implied in emptying himself of all his *possessions*, of all outward and inward riches, as a poor man who will enter into the kingdom of heaven,—what is implied in following *Him*, receiving grace from Him, and retaining that grace under the cross. That the rich young man goes away gives further occasion to Christ to open up more fully to the disciples, who were then present, the true significance of this incident and of what He had already said. He affirms by way of warning that *a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven;* and in such a manner that the disciples must have understood the general and deep-reaching meaning of the words. Therefore, by the general question at ver. 25, they elicit the concluding declaration: *The being saved*, with all that belongs thereto, is for men generally (rich and poor) possible only through the omnipotent grace of God. But upon this Peter leaps again from the first and more intelligent question to the other side of the error; he thinks that *they had done what* was required of the young man, and thus appropriates to himself again as a possession the (not yet inwardly true) re-

Hosted by Google

nunciation which they had made. For he claims the *reward* of this as a thing due to him and meritoriously earned. Upon this our Lord declares, finally, that an inconceivable reward of grace is (in future and even now) assuredly prepared, as for the Apostles, so for every disciple who forsakes and renounces all in order to follow Christ; *but yet that there is great danger* of losing what is the main element and consummation of the reward, *eternal life*, if an eager desire of reward should mar and inwardly cancel the act of renunciation. This, as we shall see, is the import of the saying which, in chap. xix. 30 and xx. 16, stands at the beginning and the end of the parable which illustrates it.

St Matthew, the eye-witness, introduces the incident, which had made a deep impression upon him, with a *Behold!* to awaken attention. St Luke at least gives it in the same connection; while St Mark still more definitely connects it with the foregoing in the words "*When He was gone out*," *i.e.*, after blessing the children. The indefinite εἷς or τίς of St Matthew and St Mark is afterwards designated by νεανίσκος; according to Luke he was an ἄρχων, president, or ruler of some kind. However much this incident resembles in the beginning that other recorded by St Luke, chap. x, 25, there is yet a great difference. This appears in the further course of the reply to the same question; and, moreover, the question is in the other case put in a malicious, tempting spirit, while in this it is asked, notwithstanding the error that accompanies it, in the sincere earnestness of a good intention. The zealous young man has already waited for Christ's coming out; he runs to meet Him in the way; he kneels down before Him with reverence, and addresses Him with the sincere title, *good Master*, used in the sense in which ἀγαθέ, κράτιστε and the like were generally used, and as the seven elders of a synagogue were (at least at a later period) called טוֹבִים. There is perhaps less of flattery than of thoughtlessness in this expression; it is inconsiderateness which leads him to use this great word, ἀγαθός, in connection with τί ἀγαθὸν ποιήσω; This is the error which our Lord lays hold of. He was not precisely a youth, according to the present use of the term; for he says, ver. 20, ἐκ νεότητός μου (which indicates one who had passed considerably beyond the stage of νεότης). Yet he was a *young man* to be a ruler, and this also speaks for the

Hosted by Google

earnestness and zeal of his legal piety.[1] He has aimed at *doing that which is good*, and would fain produce instances of this goodness; he knows also (what not many so clearly knew and frankly confessed) that the way into the kingdom of heaven, even for Israelites and rulers, is this doing good. He even speaks earnestly of *eternal life*,[2] which occurs literally in the Old Testament only in Dan. xii. 2; which afterwards had a settled place in the deeper *doctrine* among the Jews (Wis. ii. 23; xv. 3); and, in the time of Christ, was a current idea and expression, adopted, like many others, by the phraseology of that time in anticipation of a fuller revelation. He who thus spake in earnest had already passed beyond that understanding of the Old Testament promises which cleaves to what is earthly; and for that reason *Marcion* would here cancel the αἰώνιον. It might almost be said in praise of this ruler, that he desired a better life, even an heavenly (Heb. xi. 16). But apart from what we shall soon find, namely, that in deep reality his heart yet cleaves to the possessions of this world, his grand error lies certainly in the ἵνα, *that* I may have. He connects the ἔχειν ζωήν (according to Mark and Luke it is even κληρονομεῖν; he does not perceive the contradiction between this Scripture expression and his meaning) with the deserving and earning ποιεῖν. Nay, since, in his question, he goes beyond the ordinary commandments, we see that in his blindness he aims at truly meritorious, extraordinary, works by which he might come to be like the *good* master!

Ver. 17. The other reading in St Matthew, "*What askest thou Me about the good?* One is good!"—although received by many with favour,[3]—we cannot by any means accept, notwithstanding

[1] How, according to Stein (on St Luke, S. 205), Matthew could be induced by the ἐκ νεότητός μου to add his νεανίσκος as a conjecture, seems incomprehensible to us; seeing that the opposite might rather be inferred from that expression, as Neander even infers from the entire style of address.

[2] Here this expression occurs for *the first time*, and again only at Matthew xxv. 46 in the first three Gospels; it first comes prominently forward in St John. Still it denotes only what is presupposed in, and forms, the fundamental idea of the entire Bible revelation, even from the Old Testament onwards. Lutz, in his Bibl. Dogmatik, p. 19, affirms this more satisfactorily than he afterwards brings it out in detail.

[3] Amongst whom is Jul. Müller, because this reading suits *his* philosophy:—Christ leads first of all from the particular to the *abstract*, general *idea* of the good; then from this to the personal God! (V. d. Sünde i. 110). Schleiermacher nearly to the same effect.

Hosted by Google

the authorities quoted in its support. It might appear indeed to be quite agreeable to the sense that in *περὶ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ*, the idea, the essence of the good should be brought into prominence. But, on the other hand, this is far *too abstract* for the concrete saying of our Lord, which directly takes up the word of the questioner; since He seldom, and only upon special occasion, speaks in abstract terms. It is rather an early gloss which would correct the text; because the *τί με λέγεις ἀγαθόν* (confirmed by two other Evangelists) was found to be dogmatically offensive and unintelligible.[1] If Christ, however, had not really said this, how would any one have been so bold as to put in this expression? And why should St Matthew in this place, quite against his usual manner, give the paraphrase instead of the more exact word? He alone has the question and answer quite exact. *Twice* does the young man make use of the weighty word *ἀγαθός* (the other Evangelists have merely *τί ποιήσω, τί ποιήσας*); and, strictly corresponding with this, the same word occurs twice also in the answer: "What dost thou mean by this word which thou hast twice used? Be not so hasty with this great word! I am (for thee) not so suddenly a good master; and there are great doubts about the *doing* good of those who *are not* good." The young Ruler of course, with all his kneeling reverence, held Christ to be a mere *man;* and this presupposition our Lord condescends for the time to accept for the sake of his other words. In his address to the Lord, the young man, with substantially the same error, calls *Him ἀγαθός, good;* and artlessly without more ado gives *himself* credit for the capacity *ἀγαθόν τι ποιῆσαι, to do that which is good.* The same error exhibits itself in ignorance of the *evil* of fallen man; and further, in not knowing that even the creature who is not fallen has yet not in himself the ground and source of the *being good.* Christ takes care not to say, *I am not good;* or, One only is good, *My Father.*[2] When He calls Himself the good *Shepherd,* John

[1] Origen already read both texts beside each other; the *Syriac,* however, which has always great value for us, has only the common reading.

[2] It is so read only in the Clementines, in order to introduce the Marcionitic separation of the *good* God of Christ, from the merely *righteous* Lawgiver of the Old Testament. (S. Hilgenfeld Clement. Recogn. p. 270.) Recently, Vigilantius Rationalis scrupled not to interpret: "only the *Father* in heaven"—so as to bring out an antithesis to the *Son,* as at chap. xxiv. 36.

Hosted by Google

x. 12, this is more than a good *Master;* when, John viii. 46, He maintains His sinlessness, He *precisely thereby* attests the *Divinity* dwelling in His present humanity; for, without this, בֶּן־אָדָם, the son of man, and sinner, are one and the same.[1] He deals more exactly with the word than the Rationalists, who "exhaust themselves in phrases, call Him the best, noblest, most excellent, most perfect, etc.," and yet deny His Divine dignity. He said then to the young Ruler what He must say still more strongly to these modern panegyrists, not in kindness, but in anger:—*Why callest thou Me good?*" He, however, at the same time attests His Divinity (although He does not speak plainly of what is concealed) when He who knew no sin affirms:—"*None is good save One, that is God.*[2] Luther well compares with this that other word, "My doctrine is not Mine,"—where Christ in like manner speaks of His humanity as such. Still more profoundly Augustine says here: "Christ knew Himself not after the flesh." Oetinger, on the other hand, seems to go too deep when he thinks that God alone is *good* as being ἀπείραστος κακῶν, *not tempted of evil* (Jam. i. 13); that the good angels, as being still liable to fall, are not pure before Him; and that even the humanity of Christ, as liable to temptation, was not *good* in the absolute sense. For these ideas, though true in a certain measure, do not belong to the connection here; and would be too far above the capacity of the inquirer to be an answer to his question. Nay, we would not even adopt Ullmann's view—that Jesus here calls only God "good" in the most pregnant sense, because the *human* goodness and morality of Jesus can only be a *becoming* goodness, such as develops itself and must reach its perfection through conflict—for this necessarily runs into the

[1] *Never* has Jesus anywhere said (if He says so here it is the only time) that any one honoured Him too highly; never did He protest against any degree of love, honour, thanksgiving, adoration. Roos, die Lehre. J. Christi, S. 79.

[2] See Hom. lit. Correspondenzblatt 1829, p. 176. "Choose then, ye friends of reason, between these two conclusions dictated by reason itself. None is good but the one God; Christ is good; therefore Christ is the one God. Or: none is good but the one God; Christ is not the one God; therefore *Christ is not good.*" The same dilemma is presented quite as sharply and correctly in the fine sermon by Nitzsch (vi. Auswahl S. 6)—with which we in general entirely agree as it respects the exegesis of the text.

Hosted by Google

preceding error.[1] We abide by the simple sense that Christ—without denying His own goodness or His own Divinity, in virtue of which (differently from what it does in other men) that goodness dwells in His humanity—testingly corrects the youth, and thus in the first place shames his pride by His own humility. "Thou speakest with too much readiness of *doing* good; I tell thee it is necessary first *to be* good (I too should not be good, as thou thinkest, if I were a man as thou supposest); it is necessary in particular for thee to *become* good before, in the way of *doing*, thou canst bring out this or that good thing from the inward treasure. (Chap. xii. 35.) It is necessary to stand in unbroken fellowship with the alone independent original source of all goodness; for out of, and without God, no one is good.[2] But if, with real and upright earnestness, thou wilt enter into the *life* of which thou speakest—the good God has long since told thee (so that thou needest not to ask of me) in what way man is again to become holy as God is holy!" As we read in the Talmud (Rosch haschanah, Fol. 59, 1; Zeror hammor, Fol. 151, 2), "Nothing is good but *the law*"—so Christ points to this mirror of the Divine goodness and holiness for sinful man, to its particular *commandments*, which contain answer enough for every τί ἀγαθόν. Wilt thou do good?—then be and become good; God is good—"let *His* word (and commandment) be thy *teacher*." Our Lord here, as at ver. 23, makes the *eternal life*, after which the young man inquires, to be the same with the kingdom of heaven; for He uses the word εἰσελθεῖν, *enter into*, which is the formula generally used in connection with the latter. For the rest He quotes only the word of Moses. (Lev. xviii. 5.) He does not say, however, *eternal* life, because it does not so stand in that passage; but He teaches us to interpret and understand the Mosaic promise as referring to eternal life, just as at Luke

[1] Comp. Wimmer's argument against this, Stud. u. Krit. 1845, 1. What he, however, seeks to bring out by a different interpretation of the εἰ μή—No one is good *except* under the condition that God, as the original source of all goodness, is the ground also of his goodness—appears to us too far-fetched, and beyond the connection, when put forward on grammatical grounds in this way, although it certainly remains the deeper fundamental idea.

[2] "The master in Israel (John iii. 2), and the *ruler* of our text, are to be pronounced alike foolish, because they presume to give judgment upon a thing which they do not yet at all understand." Stein on St Luke, S. 206.

Hosted by Google

x. 25, 28. Those who will not do so, and who understand by the word "life" in the writings of Moses only temporal good, are refuted by Christ Himself. Further, our Lord here maintains against the Antinomians, that the law must by all means be kept and fulfilled in order to salvation; only that this is to be done in no other way than that which is by grace.[1] In the error of those who seek righteousness by works, and apply themselves to this in their own strength, there is a partial and perverted truth; Christ builds upon this, and teaches in the first place to be thoroughly earnest in the endeavour, so as to penetrate through that to the truth. How can he who has not first *made the attempt* by works, come to that repentance which alone leads to faith in Divine grace, and thus to the true establishing of the law?

Ver. 18, 19. *The* commandments—says Christ plainly; and the expression would denote the "ten commandments" almost as definitely to an Israelite, as the same expression would do now to a Christian child. Or, if the usage according to which these commandments were thus designated had by this time begun to be uncertain, Christ here confirms it; and teaches us to recognise in the commandments given from Sinai the permanent kernel of legislation, universally binding in order to eternal life;—just as He here, and again chap. xxii. 37–40, makes use of two summary expressions from Moses for the two tables. The Ruler must have begun to perceive what the good Master would say; this he betrayed at once when, with an inconsiderately hasty expression of surprise at being thus referred back to old things, he asked—Ποίας; *Which?* Surely not the old, familiar, common commandments? St Mark and St Luke (in which we have another instance of their more inexact condensation) pass over, as the foregoing citation from Lev. xviii. 5, so also this characteristic intermediate question. They represent Christ as at once saying, "*Thou knowest the commandments.*" St Matthew informs us most exactly how and what Christ spake; and that He prescribed, not merely to this young man, but at the same time to us all, the *true beginning of the catechism* in order to a knowledge of sin. Let those Christian catechists who

[1] Wilt thou, an accepted follower of the Saviour, lose again the life received from Him, and from being one of the first become one of the last who remain without? Only despise the commandments, as if they were not to be kept precisely by thee!

Hosted by Google

deem the Decalogue imperfect and insufficient to embrace all that men are required to do in order to eternal life; and those, in like manner, who would remove it from the true place which God Himself has given to it as the παιδαγωγὸς εἰς Χριστόν, *the schoolmaster leading to Christ;*—see to it that they are not contradicting their Master, who here undeniably fixes its true use and place, at the beginning of the catechism. But why does He begin with the *second* table? Because this is most fitted to carry conviction from without to the heart; and because it is more natural to test at once man's conduct towards men.[1] The sum and substance of the *first* table—Honour God alone!—He has already indicated at ver. 17; nor does He fail here, looking back, to repeat the commandment respecting father and mother (already, chap. xv. 4, brought forward as an important fundamental commandment), as the *transition* from the first table to the second. He then concludes with what is also explained at chap. xxii. 39 as the *sum* of the second table; which declares that it must be understood in a spiritual sense as taking cognisance of and judging the *disposition of the heart*, so that these very words, Thou shalt *love!* at the same time include and represent the last commandment against coveting. The two other Evangelists do not so carefully preserve the original words; both follow (as also the Apostle at Rom. xiii. 9), a transposition to be found in Philo (and which had come to be in use in the Jewish schools), of adultery before murder, and leave out the love of our neighbour. St Mark gives instead of this a peculiar, and by no means strictly corresponding, expression of the *last* commandment, which denotes the Οὐκ ἐπιθυμήσεις by its most natural expression in the outward act, Μὴ ἀποστερήσῃς. Only as given by St Matthew does the *test* of our Lord's questions rise with psychological delicacy to its keenest climax: Hast thou kept *this?* And actually *this* also. First come the negative commandments, the expression of which has most to do with the outward work and word, and from which a man most easily justifies himself. Then, more positively, a commandment which points to the disposition

[1] As a true catechist must still always *hold up prominently* before children the *second* table (with the "Father and Mother" that leads to it; and, in its sum, the love of our neighbour). So, on the other hand, the deeper *understanding* of the first table is reached only in the second and third department of it.

Hosted by Google

of heart; that, viz., which is the *first* commandment for men, and in which the honour which as a child he gives to God coincides with that which he gives to those who stand to him in the stead of God. Finally comes the altogether positive and inward commandment of *love*. All this, however, implies in it the rebuking question: Is the man to whom such prohibitions and commands must be given—by nature *good?* Is he not from his birth a murderer, adulterer, thief and liar in heart, a child without reverence, a man without love?

Ver. 20. The young man is too much blinded to understand Christ's meaning, and now first makes manifest his entire blindness.[1] He vainly imagines, as, alas! many do still, that he stands perfectly well with the ten commandments! Probably when our Lord began with *Thou shalt not kill!* he had his answer already on his tongue. When He reached the *Honour thy father and mother*, he hastened in his thought to add *from my youth up:*—which was a proverbial expression among the Jews for the fulfilment of the law and piety, see Tob. i. 8–10; ii. 13; 2 Tim. iii. 15.[2] The Lord's last word, however, which should have struck him most keenly, he *does not hear at all;* and so he delivers himself at once of the fearfully artless lie:—All these have I kept, and carefully had respect to! "Thou hast been a reverently obedient child from the womb? Thou hast then loved thy neighbour as thyself thy whole life long?"—And yet the young man does not consciously lie, but seriously thinks that it is as he says; hence, according to St Mark, Christ looked upon him with pitying love and kindness. Be not thou, O Christian teacher and evangelist, too soon polemically offended with all who are legally righteous! Do not unwisely and unjustly speak against such mistaken ones with angry dogmatical rebuke! There is a difference to be observed among the self-righteous. This young man is of a nobler nature, and stands unconsciously in a transitional class between the Pharisee and publican, the contrast between whom is portrayed in the parable which, in St

[1] St Mark puts into his mouth in this answer again a Διδάσκαλε, now without the rejected *epitheton ornans*.

[2] This sufficiently accounts for the expression. We are not under the necessity (with Neander, as already mentioned) of supposing that this was an *aged* man looking back complacently on his past life, and of correcting the statement of Matthew accordingly.

Hosted by Google

Luke, immediately precedes. The *justitia civilis*, the outward keeping of the commandments so far as one knows and can keep them, has a certain worth in its kind;—who would not regard such a youth with more pleasure than he would a wild and dissolute transgressor? But, indeed, this very rectitude prevents the heart which honestly strives from being at peace, assured, and tranquil; the more one has kept the commandments, the more urgently will the self-betraying question obtrude, *What lack I yet?* Such a man understands not his own question; he thinks that he means, Are there not somewhere still more commandments to which I must apply myself?—is there not some special extra-work for my zeal in doing good? But his heart confesses, against his knowledge and will, that there is still one thing, and that the principal thing, lacking to him. Now, he who goes on self-willed and uninstructed in this way, will doubtless, from a good beginning, land at last in the worst Pharisaism and monkery; but he who only proceeds with *questioning*, and comes to the *true Master*, shall obtain the true *answer* which will lay open the bottom of the heart.

Ver. 21. Thus does the wisdom and love of Christ receive and treat the case. He does not deal unjustly with the young man, as if He understood him arrogantly to say, Am I not then perfect, having kept all the commandments? for then would he not have come to the good Master at all, and would not have stayed to ask anything more after the first question. *One thing thou lackest still!* Thus do St Mark and St Luke express Christ's meaning; but we must interpret the words, with Luther's marginal note: Thou art still entirely lacking; with the one thing thou lackest all,—the principal thing! Literally Christ said, *If thou wilt be perfect:*—words which sympathise with, and enter into, the young man's feeling; but at the same time humble and most keenly convict him. Apparently Christ gives him what he has desired, and points out to him a special work; but observe that what He requires of him is only a simple test, whether he is able really to keep that first commandment of the first table from which all others flow, whether he has even understood its spiritual requirement. "Keep then the first commandment in truth, and show that thy possessions are not Mammon and an idol to thee!" A foolish teacher would have directly contradicted the young man by merely laying down the doctrine

Hosted by Google

that the matter so stands, and following that up with the direct charge, Thou art in thy riches still an idolater! But the wise Teacher lays hold on him by proposing to him something to be done, just as he himself had requested:—Go, sell thy goods and give them to the poor, so that thou mayest love these poor as thyself! Not the fanatical advice to throw them into the street or the sea, but to distribute (Luke διάδος comp. Luke chap. xi. 22, and Acts iv. 35), with the wisdom and joy of love, the superfluity among the needy. It is evident that the outward obeying of this command is to be no general rule for all possessors who would be saved; while Christ gave an earnest command to this young Ruler, He imposes it only upon such special individual cases as his was. It is equally clear, further, that this selling all, in itself without price and merit, is required of this individual only as a test; it was but the preparatory act which would disembarrass him for what comes immediately after, viz., *Follow Me!* Still, however, we shall altogether mistake the meaning of Christ,—who always in the external meaning includes the internal,—if we do not recognise in His words the figuratively embodied fundamental commandment which He utters, for example, in Luke xiv. 33, comp. Luke xii. 33:—"*Become poor!*" That is the great essential. *All that thou hast* (Mark and Luke already spiritualising and explaining: ὅσα ἔχεις)—that is, also the imagined riches consisting in the fulfilment of the law and virtuous deeds, ver. 20. Hast thou, as a monk, parted with thy goods only to be more proud of them in heart, what will that help thee?[1] The command comes ever anew, penetrates deeper and deeper, until it pierces the heart:—Sell also thy imagined possession, expressed in the words, "*I have sold all.*" *Follow Me*, that thou mayest learn in My school what grace is, how thou mayest receive the kingdom of heaven as a little child, and look only to the treasure in heaven. *Me:*—there now stands, supplementing the humble saying at ver. 17, the one Master, as personally and essentially good, to cleave to whom is and becomes alone true doing good. St Mark adds (from Matt. x. 38 and similar sayings), *Take up the cross;* we might certainly doubt whether Christ uttered the word in so discouraging and repelling a manner precisely to *this*

[1] See the words of Fulgentius in Neander's Denkwurd. iii. 1–28.

Hosted by Google

young man; still, as regards the profound and general import of the saying, this is its true meaning.

"A man may pledge and stake his head a hundred times; but if any one were to proceed to take it from him, he would feel for the first time how firmly it sits,—how it sticks to him." (Gossner.) So is it with the young man here, who now perceives with deep shame how much his idolatrous heart cleaves still to the possessions of this world. Caught by his own inquiry after works of perfection, sharply smitten in his own conscience, he cannot turn aside the command of the Master by asking, Where, then, is such a commandment enjoined upon me? With what right dost Thou require in the name of God so much as this of me? He feels what our Lord purposed to make him feel. "To disobey is hard for him, and to obey still more hard" (as Roos excellently expresses it). The command addressed to him with friendly look makes his countenance and heart sad; he goes away silent, and his silence says: "No, that I cannot possibly do!" We are not told whether this sadness resulted in the godly sorrow and humility proper to a sinner. But Christ makes him, going away just as he is, a warning example for his disciples; and proceeds more fully to disclose to them the import of what He had said and done.

Vers. 23, 24. Proverbial and figurative discourse has always this character, that the outward letter is not to be pressed in the particulars as it is in a doctrinal proposition, but that a background of spiritual meaning all the more deep opens itself up for application. As our Lord in ver. 24 does not merely repeat with greater emphasis what He has said in ver. 23, but intends rather to lay the real emphasis on the figurative proverb, and to conduct to *this* by the transition from the case that had just occurred, what is said in ver. 23 acquires also for all subsequent hearers and readers, nay, even for the apprehension of the disciples at the time, a parabolic character. He speaks indeed first of all in strict earnestness of the outwardly rich, to whom the possession of their goods becomes a dangerous hindrance, and that because they do not possess as if they possessed not, because their hearts cleave to their possessions. (Ps. lxii. 11.) For, "not so much he is rich who possesses a great deal, as he who is possessed of a great deal." (v. Gerlach.) Thus do St Mark

Hosted by Google

and St Luke rightly interpret by "they that have riches." St Mark—who (as in chap. vii., where human statutes are spoken of, and elsewhere) most frequently appends an explanation to the word—here very considerately, in order to obviate all misunderstanding of Christ's words, says, *those who trust in riches* (Prov. xi. 28; 1 Tim. vi. 17); and he does so under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in order that they in the Church who are slow to hear might have the saying of Christ also in this form. It is therefore not with Schleiermacher to be called "a limitation by a later hand;" so much, however, is true, that Christ did not here originally speak thus, otherwise the impression produced on the disciples would not have been so startling:—it remains, notwithstanding, undeniably the true *interpretation* of the meaning of Christ's words. Again it is true that such danger of putting false confidence in their possessions lies very near to all possessors. Does not Christ speak also, Matt. xiii. 22, of the deceitfulness of riches; and does not experience still prove, in spite of the exceptions from Abraham to Joseph of Arimathea, that riches properly speaking, or the possession of many goods, bring with them peculiar and serious dangers, hindrances and temptations? As a rich man, then—*i.e.*, without putting away his riches inwardly, and in some cases also outwardly (the latter is nothing without the former)—no one *shall enter* into the kingdom of heaven. And one might certainly, speaking strongly, apply the saying with Wesley still further thus: "It is also easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle[1] than for a rich man to give up trusting in his riches"—although this seems only partly true, and in comparison with the saying of Christ too severe. It is further true, that the poor cleave to the mammon which they do not possess, when, with idolatrous *covetousness*, they strive after it, and *will* be rich. (1 Tim. vi. 9.) But the whole of what was exemplified in this incident becomes for Christ a parable em-

[1] The conjecture of many Greek commentators, following Theophylact (not camel but cable), is no longer thought of by any one; *going* presupposes *feet*. The similar proverb of the *elephant* is familiar in the Koran (Sur. vii. 38), and in the Talmud (Buxtorf Lex. p. 1722), also the camel, more familiar among the Jews, according to Lightfoot Hor. Hebr., in a proverb respecting the stupid Galilean. Comp. Matt. xxiii. 24. Sepp observes that in the natural form of expression respecting the entering into the kingdom of God, eye of a needle, and door (doors, gates), appear as opposed to each other.

Hosted by Google

bodied in fact, representing a truth which entirely applies only to what is inward. If,—as according to St Matthew we suppose to be certain, and for a proverbial expression find to be natural,—Christ said merely πλούσιος, we have only to call to mind what is said in Luke vi. 24, 25, in order to understand, that He speaks in the deepest sense of the *rich in spirit*, of such as are rich in genius, in virtues, in knowledge, in honours, etc. This was the real hindrance in the way of the young man; had he been *poor in spirit*, he would also have been ready to sell his goods. Through the strait gate one must come only poor and naked, not laden with goods and virtues; this lies as much in the nature of the case as that a camel cannot go through the eye of a needle. This our Lord declares to His disciples, addressing them with a friendly τέκνα, as St Mark has it;[1] and we see immediately from their exclamation of amazement and fear that *they* have understood His meaning.

Vers. 25, 26. *Who* then can be saved! Τίς ἄρα—this is more comprehensive than merely τίς πλούσιος. Do not the poor also cleave to their scrap of possession and strive after more; has not every man at bottom something which as his possession he will not let go? If the entrance into the kingdom of heaven is so narrow, *who* then is small and unencumbered enough to enter! What Thou sayest is truly the case of all—we understand Thee; then the being saved must be in general a thing of *impossibility?* Thus do the amazed disciples think; and not of other people merely, of the always innumerable class of the rich to whom they certainly did not belong: they regard themselves as included, inasmuch as they perceive that man must renounce and relinquish all in every sense *that he has*. Christ, however, confirming this understanding of His words, *looked upon them* (which ἐμβλέψας, St Mark also does not let slip), and spake, quite openly now, of the *salvation of men* in general as a thing impossible with man, and only possible through the omnipotence of God. He strengthens the δυσκόλως into ἀδύνατον, the *hard* into *impossible;* and thus it is:—Who would be saved if it were not for the power of redeeming grace? To man of himself it is impossible even to break through the blindness of the heart, so

[1] Another reading is even τεκνία. Here, for the first time, Christ thus addresses the disciples; yet hardly, as Sepp imagines, with reference to the little ones shortly before commended.

Hosted by Google

that as a sinner he shall know and truly see *what is lacking to him;* then it is impossible to confess this in true penitence before God, and to receive grace in faith; then again always impossible to persevere in grace unto the end. But all is accomplished by the efficacious working of God, by His anticipating, strengthening, and confirming power; certainly not without *faith* (to which, therefore, all things are possible, Mark ix. 23), but that faith is (although without predestinating, electing compulsion) ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ, 1 Pet. i. 5, as a πίστις τῆς ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ, Col. ii. 12. To this faith that lays hold on the power of God, on the other hand, all is possible that pertains to salvation; from the first becoming poor and following Christ even to the *keeping of the commandments*, which also is indispensable. *Possible*—although a *difficulty* attends it to the last. Christ, indeed, is come to save the lost (Matt. xviii. 11); for otherwise this was not possible even for God. Sin must be blotted out in order that God may remain just in bestowing grace, and man free in receiving it; an atonement was necessary, and such an atonement as sanctifies. This great ἀδύνατον παρὰ ἀνθρώποις, this great *impossibility with men*, God has brought to pass in the miracle of all miracles, in the incarnate Son![1]

How ought the disciples now to have reflected upon this important saying, with another and joyful astonishment, at once satisfied and silent and affected in heart! But this was beyond their temper of mind and capacity of apprehension, at least in the case of Peter and most of them; although perhaps John and Nathanael might have thus reflected. Peter soon passes from the first salutary astonishment with which he was struck to the opposite extreme; he has too hastily appropriated to himself the friendly *look* with which Christ regarded them, as if it said, "Are not ye yourselves an example how God can save!"—and with great folly brings forward what *he himself* has done in addition to the omnipotence of God. He hides as usual behind the general *we* his favourite *I*, and says, certainly not without

[1] This interpretation is a strange contrast with that extreme which may be found—and only a specimen of his enfeebling paraphrase—in my predecessor in the exposition of the *sayings* of Jesus, the notorious Bahrdt. According to him, the meaning here is: "That which in the present intractable state of mankind is infinitely difficult, God can make gradually to become easier."

Hosted by Google

self-complacency:—Behold we have left all and followed Thee! If these words stood alone without the *question* (again only preserved by St Matthew) which is annexed to them, they might then have been taken in a good sense to mean:—Behold the Almighty God has made this possible for us, we rejoice in this and are thankful! But it sounds more questionable, it actually reverses the whole matter, when he asks τί ἄρα ἔσται ἡμῖν; We perceive that his meaning is:—We have done much better than the young man—and that again the idea of merit creeps forth from his heart. That mild interpretation of the question,—not holding the translation of Luther,—viz., "Is our renunciation of all indeed that which Thou requirest? What will fall to our lot, or be our sentence? Wilt Thou pronounce a judgment upon us different from that upon the young man, and let us pass?"—is fully confuted by the answer of Christ. Because Peter has inquired after reward and compensation, Christ says, first of all, what is contained in vers. 28, 29; but because he has asked with a culpable eagerness for reward, the parable concerning the first and the last follows with its earnest warning and rebuke. The matter then stands thus: Peter, who has not yet understood Luke xvii. 10, puts his question in the spirit of Job (chap. xxxi. 2); and betrays what, alas! may still be too often found in the followers of Christ who have left all, a self-righteous regard to the reward of grace, as if it were not pure grace. In such cases the injunction is ever again to be repeated: Sell all that thou hast; renounce also all that thou hast received from Me, appropriate it not to *thyself*, as if thou hadst not *received* it! Look not self-complacently to what thou hast done, but zealously to what thou hast still to do, that thou mayest fulfil thy course! Imagine not that thou art finished and perfect! Ask rather, without ceasing, *What lack I yet?* This is better than *What shall I have, therefore?*

Ver. 28. The scanty possessions, of which Peter seems somewhat presumptuously to speak when he says, We have given up *all* (not entirely, however, as they still retained the possession of it), was certainly not worth the kingdom of heaven as a purchase-price; and Christ might indeed have sharply ridiculed it. This He does not, however. He knows well that it is *difficult* for the fisher to leave his boat, the publican his little house, and every one whatever he calls his own; that in the end the poorest does

Hosted by Google

enough when he renounces his *all;* and that the heart of the beggar may cleave more to a few pence than that of the rich man to great sums. Nôr was that so altogether inconsiderable which, for example, Peter possessed in Capernaum; and the two sons of Zebedee, with their hired servants (Mark i. 20); and Matthew, who could give a great feast in his house. Therefore, with great kindness and grace, He first of all acknowledges that they had actually "followed Him" by *renouncing* all, holds in all honour their obedience to the apostolic calling, and, without finding fault, holds out to them the Apostle-thrones as its result; then, however, follows the earnest rebuke of the impure element of self which was mixed up with their renunciation. Not, as many harshly understand the sincere meaning of Christ, that He at first, half *ironically*,[1] set before them the glory to which their faithfulness would not fail to attain (which was the self-evident reward of those who were the supreme ministers of the highest King), in order then all the more severely to say:—But take care that you do not lose it! No, He is exalted above such feelings and moods; He Himself, joyfully prophesying, looks first at the future glory to which He knows that His twelve Apostles *will* attain, and to which He would have them to look up. For we are to rejoice on account of the reward in heaven (Luke vi. 23); the command addressed to the rich young man contained in it also the promise,—Thou shalt have treasure in heaven! St Mark and St Luke leave out the first special promise for the Apostles; but St Matthew gives it all the more exactly. Ye who have *followed Me;*—this not merely acknowledges the past, but lays down at the same time, with all the full emphasis of this great word, the condition which still remains; therefore, in latent prophecy, it already excludes Judas, just as later Luke xxii. 28–30. Still, there are *twelve* seats; for another shall receive the office of the traitor, and God's plans suffer no defeat on account of individual sinners.[2] The *regeneration*, as appears from the explanatory

[1] That it is entirely ironical has been asserted only by perverse expositors, such as Liebe in Winer's exeget. Studien.

[2] The spiritualising interpretation of Rud. Matthäi (The Power and Dignity of the Prince), which finds here a *dominion* also, in the perfected kingdom at the end, for those who are called and prepared to exercise it, goes beyond these literally named *twelve* apostolic thrones.

Hosted by Google

clause which is added respecting the glory of the Son of Man, is the renewal of the world, of the earth (hence the Persian version has *in the new world*); a restoration of the primitive state of things on the whole, as well as the regeneration of man, from which the expression, by extension and comparison, is derived.[1] Not merely the final *adoption* of the children of God (Rom. viii. 23; Luke xx. 36) in the resurrection of the dead, but the concomitant glorification of all creatures in order to the glory which corresponds to the freedom of the children of God (Rom. viii. 23). This δόξα of the new world, is itself the δόξα of the υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, in which, however, His special θρόνος will in some way be set up. All the members of the new born race of this second Adam have a common participation in the glory of the Son of Man; for such as bear honours, however, there are special *thrones*, from which are to be governed the twelve tribes of Israel; *i.e.*, the new and true Israel, the entire people of God in their multiplicity, formed after the *type* of those twelve tribes. Accordingly ἐν τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ is, in the last sense, equivalent to *in My kingdom*, St Luke xxii. 30 (comp. Matt. xxvi. 29); and the sense in which it is understood by the two sons of Zebedee (Matt. xx. 21) is quite correct. Although finally κρίνειν in this place signifies not *judge* but *govern*, as שׁפט in the Heb., yet Bengel's fine observation is not without ground:—Of Christ, it is καθίσῃ in the *Active*, of the Apostles καθίσεσθε in the *Middle*;[2] for they take not their seats until they have first stood, with all others, before the judgment throne of Him who sits (Luke xxi. 36; 2 Cor. v. 10).

Ver. 29. Should not an honest heart have been *humbled* by the very greatness and loftiness of the promise? Should not Peter and all the Apostles have been constrained to say with shame:—Lord, this comes to us not as a recompense for leaving our ships and nets; this is *grace*, and not reward at all! Christ even now, in passing to the intended rebuke, helps them to such thoughts and feelings, inasmuch as, in order to check their special *we*, He *widens* the promise. They must learn to

[1] *To follow Christ in the regeneration* (as Göschel v. d. lezten Dingen S. 23 connects the words) is not a correct expression; but the hope of the near regeneration of the world on account of their own regeneration, is a combination which Göschel correctly views.

[2] Hence also the difference of the case in θρόνου and θρόνους.

Hosted by Google

speak as the last Apostle did, who, according to Christ's choice, came in the room of the one who fell from the number of the twelve,—the greatest and least Apostle:—*Not to me only* shall the crown be given by the righteous Judge, but to all them also that love His appearing (2 Tim. iv. 8). *Every one* without distinction who *has forsaken* whatsoever he loved and held dear, whatever his heart clave to (here it is not at first μισεῖν Luke xiv. 26 which is yet always indispensable, but, the bearing patiently actual loss, the free surrender)—*for the sake of Christ* (Matt.: for My name's sake; Mark: for My sake and the Gospel's; Luke: for the kingdom of God's sake)—shall suffer no loss thereby, but shall obtain most abundant compensation. The so-called sacrifices which are made in the cause of God receive this name at first only with reference to our unbelief; for every such loss brings after it rich gain. The only goods that are named by way of example, are those of house, of family love, and of the earthly possession that most binds the heart; for, of such things the disciples had been speaking. St Matthew and St Mark have, with slight differences, the same arrangement of the particulars. It begins at first generally with the house; then, in the members of the family, it rises gradually to an ever more difficult renunciation (for one separates himself from brothers and sisters sooner than from parents, while one cleaves to his wife more than to these, and finally, with most intensity to children); and then returns again to the more direct and real property in lands. This we take to be the original form; while St Luke gives the substance by an abridgment, in which the arrangement is not so exact. There are many significant things to be noticed in these words; in which we plainly perceive the superintending care of the Holy Spirit, providing against every essentially improper expression, such as might contradict the cautious and well-weighed saying of our Lord. That no divorce can be meant here by the forsaking of wife is self-evident from the declaration so earnestly made by Christ not long before. That He mentions brothers, and sisters, and children in the plural, but only one wife, as also one father and one mother, is in like manner conformable to that declaration in favour of monogamy. Finally, that, in the particular repetition of the persons again received back by way of recompense (which St Mark alone gives, and, we can hardly suppose, as a

Hosted by Google

mere amplification), even *mother*[1] is specified, while there is *no* mention again of wife or wives—is wisely and becomingly directed against all enthusiastic abuse of the words; although it is also true that in a certain sense (only not in the *conjugal*) compensation will be given also for the wife who has been left. How and when does Christ promise that this hundred-fold (Luke, manifold), *i.e.*, this intensively (somewhat according to 1 Sam. i. 8) much better compensation, shall be made? *Now* already *in this time*, or world, which St Mark and St Luke precisely distinguish from the eternal life in the future world; as also St Matthew at least in his καὶ ζωὴν αἰώνιον. Therefore, by virtue of the spiritual fellowship of goods and of love, in the church of believers; where St Paul found a mother (Rom. xvi. 13) and many children, where Timothy found brothers and sisters (1 Tim. v. 1, 2); and where the great principle holds good, *All things are yours!* (1 Cor. iii. 22.) Even *houses* and *lands* in this present time are compensated in this manner. Often indeed quite literally, as when those who forsake them are received by others for the sake of Christ into the joint possession and use of their property; at all events, in the sense of 2 Cor. vi. 10, that Christ takes better care of His followers than if they had retained house and hall with unfaithfulness toward Him. All this, however, is μετὰ διωγμῶν, *i.e.*, at present amid persecutions, according to the nature of the kingdom of the cross before the period of glory; not without continued patience for righteousness sake.

Ver. 30. And now, after such great promises,—the fulfilment of which every one who ventures to put them to the test has in all times experienced,—there follows a warning antithesis. The saying which contains this St Luke has not subjoined; St Mark only gives the simplest expression of it; while St Matthew connects it with the parable which illustrates it. Our Lord indeed had already uttered the proverbial saying on another occasion (Luke xiii. 30); here, however, He devotes to it an entire parable, as He does in like manner to that other in Matt. xiii.

[1] For nature gives us only one, but love many! So Alford excellently, although he forgets himself when he speaks of "fathers and mothers." This also Christ has wisely not repeated; the reading καὶ πατέρα appears to us introduced as a correction, just as the singular μητέρα adopted by Lachmann.

Hosted by Google

12, spoken at a later period, chap. xxv. 14–30; and again to that which is added at chap. xx. 16 (many are called but few chosen) the entire parable in chap. xxii. 2–14. We will leave, then, this profound saying to explain itself in the parable; and at the outset content ourselves with Meyer's excellent note, which indeed contains everything:—The first "in time, gifts, self-estimation, and appearance" shall be last, and *vice versa*. We observe now only so much—as indicating the *proper direction* for the understanding of the *parable*, which beyond all question culminates in the saying placed before and after it—that Christ according to all evident connection with what goes before means to say:—The *penny of this country* (which, at ver. 29, I promise to all My followers, as a reward of grace to be obtained *even here upon earth*) I will assuredly pay to every one. But *at last* (as respects the *eternal life*) it will be otherwise; then shall many who had been preferred remain behind and without, as being sufficiently paid by what he has received; while many late ones shall be advanced.

We must at once, according to what is here indicated, declare against the arbitrary assertion of Neander (with Strauss and De Wette), that both sayings (chap. xix. 30, and xx. 16) are entirely out of their place here, and mar the import of the parable! We are sorry to be obliged to say rather that Neander shows he has entirely misunderstood the parable,—a necessary result, indeed, of such rejection of the authentic interpretation of the sacred text.

CHAP. XX. 1–16. In order to understand this parable,[1] so much contested from the beginning, and lately so much mangled and distorted by a multitude of special treatises, it is certainly of decisive importance to settle the principal question,

[1] To which, strangely enough, there is to be found an analogous saying in the Jerusalem Talmud (s. in Lightfoot or Vitringa), although, consistently with Jewish self-righteous feeling, with a different turn at the conclusion: "This one has *wrought more* in two hours than you the whole day!" Comp. the statements in Döpke (Hermeneutik d. neutest. Schriftsteller) S. 36, but still more exactly in Sepp ii. 244. The Mohammedan parallel adduced by Trench after Hammer (Theol. Litt. Anz. 1847, p. 252) has certainly taken its origin from the parable of Christ.

Hosted by Google

What does Christ mean by the penny, or day's hire? We maintain that all who take it to represent eternal life or blessedness grossly err, and entirely mistake the true meaning of the whole. There are three reasons in support of this, so clear that one must wonder they have not always appeared evident to all. First, eternal life cannot surely be promised as a reward of labour, in the same way as in a legal contract; which is yet plainly the meaning of the συμφωνεῖν ver. 2, comp. with ver. 13. The Lord has agreed with the labourers and the labourers with Him; and this contract is *at all events* kept, even without respect to the disposition and worthiness which afterwards shows itself; but it is not thus, assuredly, in the bestowing of eternal life. Then, secondly: The murmurers also receive the penny, and on receiving it complain that what they have received is not so much as is due to them. These, however, are, as the conclusion of the parable plainly declares, in reality none of the *chosen ones* who earn eternal life; otherwise the entire parable would contradict this its conclusion, and all who had been called would come at last into the kingdom of heaven. And yet we must in any case interpret the parable from this concluding sentence, and by no means explain this sentence as incorrectly added here, or (with Calvin) cancel it altogether, when it is found not to fit in to the interpretation given beforehand to the parable. Steffenson (Stud. u. Krit. 1848, 3) has with perfect right maintained that our Lord, by adding these concluding words, *obliges* us to seek precisely in them the principal idea of the parable. That He intends, as has been said in opposition to this, to show, by the striking contradiction implied, "that such a murmuring in heavenly things is in itself *inconceivable*"—is an idea which itself is inconceivable; because then, contrary to the fundamental rule to be observed in every parable, no reality would correspond to the principal point of the figurative story. As little can it be understood of a mere *offer* of the same eternal reward to all objectively, although afterwards the enviers exclude themselves as being subjectively unworthy to receive it; this explanation (for which Trench decides) is neither agreeable to the text of the parable nor to the nature of the case. We are not even at liberty with many to explain it of the as yet tolerant reception of the murmurers into a kingdom of earthly glory before the last day; for even there, as we are elsewhere sufficiently taught, the un-

Hosted by Google

worthy remain *without*. This lies plainly in the ὕπαγε[1] (ver. 14), which expresses *rejection* and anger; and together with which, the adjudication "Take that is *thine!*" can mean nothing else, than what, at another stage, Abraham says to the rich man. (Luke xvi. 25.) What thou hast contracted for, with that thou art discharged; but now, Away from my service, and from all intercourse with me further! "There can be no blessedness without acceptance with God"—this is the sure point of this parable; as already Gregory the Great (whom Besser cannot confute) has said: "No murmurer can receive the kingdom of heaven; and no one who receives it can murmur." Luther also (to whom the present Lutherans with their artificial exegesis ought *in this instance* to yield) saw clearly that the murmuring labourers "go off with their penny and *are damned*." What, then, is the day's hire? The same Luther, who preferred to leave this unsettled as a subordinate point, which is certainly not admissible,[2] yet goes on to say, "Therefore if we would strictly interpret, we must understand the penny of the *temporal* good; and the *favour of the householder* of the *eternal* good." Melancthon is still more positive that the *denarius* is not to be explained of the *vita aeterna*. Valerius Herberger adheres to Luther, when he says: "The object and aim of the parable is not represented in the question, Who obtains the penny,—as several have racked their brains to make out, and have only made bad worse,—but in this, Who retains the grace of the heavenly Father, so good to all?" Very true; but that we may rightly investigate this latter point, it is necessary that we thus strictly interpret the former; and it needs no racking of one's brains to read that people are here spoken of

[1] Rupprecht (Stud. u. Krit. 1847, 2) explains this most groundlessly of a mere command to go away, to leave the presence (as at ver. 4 to labour!). And even in such a departure, that is, from God's countenance, good pleasure, and fellowship, the reward can never be the inheriting of eternal life, named at chap xix. 29.

[2] "The point of the parable, therefore, in this Gospel does not lie in the penny, *whatever* that may be, nor in the distinction of the hours, but on the *earning* and *obtaining*,—how one may earn the penny." With this in substance agrees what the treatise in Tholuck's Litt. Anz. (1847, p. 275) strangely decides at last: The denarius has properly no independent interpretation (is therefore *nothing at all?*), it only expresses what faithful diligence is worth *in itself!* It appears to us, however, that this says nothing at all; for surely this main feature in the parable must be something.

Hosted by Google

who *obtain* the penny, but at the same time lose the grace of the Lord. A simple glance at what goes before suffices to show that the penny is certainly a *temporal* good, different from eternal life, though not of a merely outward and earthly nature.[1] It is manifestly that *reward, profit, or compensation* of whatsoever kind, having no necessary connection with eternal life, which such a hireling question as that of Peter (chap. xix. 27) seeks; and it means precisely the "what" after which that question asked—Such a reward the grace and righteousness of God will actually connect with service in the kingdom of God, so that *no one shall labour there in vain.* Such a portion as is rather of a merely outward kind, as the most direct compensation for anything that may have been renounced, was spoken of in Mark x. 30. Yet the "promise of *this* life" which belongs to godliness (1 Tim. iv. 8), includes in it, what must not be overlooked, the internal spiritual enjoyment and reward which all doing of what is good and right carries directly in itself; for also in this sense is Ps. xix. 12 already true, comp. 1 Cor. ix. 18. Who is there that gets *harm* from following after that which is good (1 Pet. iii. 13), and not rather abundant good? So that those who serve Christ, even *with persecutions,* and with all manner of *afflictions in the world, in the flesh,* have yet a better portion than sinners even here. We are by no means to understand a worthless *hypocritical* self-righteousness in those first who become last, but an actual entering into the calling of God by service and labour, a first laying hold of the promise, apprehended superficially, Do this and live! a promise which leads the humble, who go on to learn in God's school, to blessedness; but which has for the insincere, and those who are eager after rewards, no more than the penny that was bargained for. This penny is very various, but in every case it is exactly *that* and nothing else at which the striving of the individual aimed. For (as should well be observed) to serve for blessedness as a strict reward, to

[1] In this assertion we are not shaken by the fact that those who have most recently treated the parable are for explaining the penny of eternal life; for their interpretations are truly deficient in the simplicity which would lead to another result. Alford is among those who oppose me, describing the criticism here as "much inferior to his usual remarks;" but I must wait to see whether the second edition, with its more exact references, may more effectually convince him.

Hosted by Google

bargain for the kingdom of heaven as a return for labour—*this* no one can in truth do, *this* properly never occurs. Where it seems to occur it will be found that the heart has really meant a Jewish Messiah-kingdom or a Mohammedan paradise; always something of the nature of a penny, which, too, he will obtain in so far as it is right and possible, when God at last calls to account. In so far, also, every one receives his penny; the reward in relation to the person and his claim is, in a certain measure, the same for all. Only, we may say, on the other hand, with Dräseke: The same penny is to every one different, according to the hand that receives it, according to the mind that estimates it. Some taste in it from the first a reward *of God*, a grace and gift of eternal life; others receive it as *their* reward, as a booty which they have seized; and thus, in their penny, the penny properly so called is lost, it has become by their own fault a mere coin of discharge. "They turn the penny round about in their hand, and know not what they are to make of it." *Such* persons are represented in the parable to whom it will thus happen in the end; and *for such* the penny is certainly not eternal life.[1]

We inquire, further, with reference to the principal feature of the parable, upon which the understanding of the whole depends: What is the *day* with its twelve hours? How is the *earlier and later*, the first and last, to be interpreted? If we were at once to say, in order to obviate the other principal error of such interpretation, that the day is *not at all* analogous to the period of the world's course onward, to the last day—we should speak too hastily by far.[2] For the parable certainly connects itself, in the first place, with the relation as to time in which the *Apostles* and first disciples of Christ appear,—they being the first called at the commencement of the work of the vineyard. But, not only so, *there is reflected* in it at the same time—*looking backwards*—the general fundamental relation which is the theme

[1] How Alford can say of this eternal life, "To the enviers and grumblers it will be as the fruit which turns to ashes in the mouth"—we confess not to comprehend.

[2] Rupprecht goes too far in his protest against every supposition of Old Testament periods of time, on the ground that all parables respecting the kingdom of God make that kingdom to begin only with Christ. Has he then quite forgot that the servants were sent to seek fruit from the vineyards before the Son?

Hosted by Google

of so many parables; viz., the earlier calling of the Jews with whom God made the covenant of works in the form of legal promise, and then the compassion for the Gentiles who were in due time placed on a par with them. (Acts xv. 9.) To deny entirely this reference and application would be quite as wrong here as it would be to deny it in the parable of the two sons, which is in general cognate with that before us. This is certainly the fundamental type in the background—on which, so to speak, the picture rests—*but nothing more;* and it is now necessary to observe, that while our Lord sets out from this reference to the periods in the world's history, with their earlier and later calls, He immediately again leaves it; so that the parable, as a whole, in its developed form, can by no means be interpreted according to that reference. If, again, the Apostles are the first, then, in order to maintain the chronological line from Christ to the Judgment, we must take them in connection with the entire first apostolic church. To refer, however, the labourers thus directly to entire nations and churches, instead of to *individual persons*, is in contradiction to the whole moral harmony and tendency of the parable. Nations, and contemporaries in respect of calling, are not always of the same character or disposition; least of all does the history of the Christian Church, as a whole, exhibit such a state of things as is here denoted. Father Lambert, indeed, is for understanding it of the first Churches that were called out from the heathen, because they afterwards became proud and envious; that is true, but can it be said of them as a whole that at the first they agreed with Christ in the matter of a reward? Further, can it be said that they actually did the more difficult work,—as it is said that they first cleared out the field of the world in order to the planting of the vineyard (which yet was already there),—so that in later times the heat of the conflict became less? In this chronological view we shall nowhere find what completely corresponds to the features of the parable. Such an interpretation too hastily lays aside the connection with the question of Peter, as also with the saying, quite manifestly referring to individual persons, *Many* that are first; which, indeed, only corresponded to the πᾶς ὅστις before, ver. 29. It would also oblige us to give up all reference of the labourers to such as, like the Apostles, serve Christ in the Church by a special office, a reference which, on account of the

Hosted by Google

reasons in the last sentence, is *predominating* though not exclusive. The *labourers in the vineyard* are, of course, to be distinguished from the stems and branches of the vines; and there is evidently meant here, *first of all* (without excluding further application), a special call to labour and service, not the general call to salvation: "This special calling is a means to that general one." (Richter's Hausbibel.) Further, a systematic chronological interpretation of the *day* stands too much in the way of the instructive and principal application to the individual Christians of all times; inasmuch as in that case all who live at one period would belong to one hour, and thus the moral point of the whole, so to speak, would be lost. But what if, as we have seen, our Lord only builds, upon the grand typical background of the relation of time between earlier and later calling (as first represented in the relation between the Jews and the Gentiles), a *parable* which is afterwards differently applied?[1] We say, first of all, in general, that the whole time of the world reflects itself in every period, and repeats itself in every individual life; in order to *this* meaning, which here comes into prominence in the evident reference to individual persons, we must withdraw our eye from the historical survey of the whole, as Christ Himself does, in the particular development of the parable. *For*, in the first place, it is impossible to show how there can be a continuing to labour on the part of the first till the coming of Christ to judgment;[2] secondly, in this case *all* the first would appear as murmuring at last, which is yet far from the meaning of Christ; thirdly, taken in a literally historical view, the penny which was not paid till the evening, must certainly be the participation in the earthly kingdom of Christ, into which, however, as already said, no enviers shall enter.—Is then the day to be understood as the *lifetime* of each individual man? We answer again, as above, that there is some truth in this (for parables in general throw out their light in manifold rays, and are not exhausted by a single fixed sense); but if, as many do, we maintain this in a literally historical sense, we shall again miss the true meaning

[1] Otherwise expressed: "The difference of hours serves only as a figure for the difference of rank." (Theol. Litt. Anz.)

[2] Origen fables about the transmigration of souls, according to which the first work on to the end, and even the last have stood idle the whole day (in former bodies)!

Hosted by Google

and find contradictions. Not merely, and not as the principal sense, can Christ mean the lifetime of the individual. For, in the first place, it may be said here again that not all who are called in youth are eager for reward, nor all who are called later in life on that account chosen. Further, the different lifetimes have not all the same beginning and end, they have not a common date of payment; and this is strong enough of itself to limit this chronological view; finally, the *preference* and *precedency* of the first, certainly, by no means, refers *merely* to time. Many a one labours much in a more difficult office than others, bears the heat of the conflict without, while others tarry by the stuff in peace; nay, what is equally to the purpose, many a one is merely first in honour, or, moreover, only in his own fancy:—I am more, and labour more. What, then, is the day with its hours? No other than a parabolical *figurative* representation of the *relation between first and last* existing in *all possible* forms; certainly, with most immediate reference to time, from which, indeed, the expression "first and last" is derived, but including further all other applications to all sorts of precedency, whether founded on truth, appearance, or fancy.

To conclude: this parable, as a whole, in respect to its *process of time*, is not a chronologically prophetic representation, to be explained in a literally historical manner,[1] of something that takes place precisely thus (as is the case in other parables; for example, the tares and the wheat, the drawing of the net and selecting of the fishes, the casting out of the husbandmen who killed the son, the marriage of the king's son, the ten virgins, the servants with the talents, the great supper)—but a comprehensive *figurative* representation, taking its rise from the relation of time but afterwards spiritualised, of something that thus takes

[1] Bengel also cannot quite disengage himself from this misapprehension; and when he understands the space of time comprehended by the parable to be from the first calling of the Apostles onwards to the Pentecost, he forgets that, previous to the Pentecost, those who were called had not wrought at all! Chronological fancies respecting the great world-hours are to be found in the Berlenberg Bible, as also in the Fathers, according to which the Apostles come again at the eleventh hour! Of these Luther said: "Such talk is good for passing the time when one has nothing else to preach." And here, where the parable affords quite different material for *preaching*, he is quite right.

Hosted by Google

place *oftentimes* and *in many ways*. The figure brings together and arranges into a totality of impression what manifoldly repeats itself; in *such* parables, for example, as the building of the house on the rock, the various kinds of ground, the treasure and pearls, the wicked servant, the true and wise servant, the fig-tree in the vineyard, the lost son, the unrighteous householder, Lazarus in Abraham's bosom.[1]

The *point of connection* for the parable is no other than the question of Peter: *for this reason only those* "first" are selected, in ver. 2, who have regard to the reward; and the agreement is as it were an irony *coming after* the discourse in chap. xix. 27–29. Observe now the different expression of the proverbial saying at the beginning and the end, a difference which thus precisely justifies and explains itself. Οἱ ἔσχατοι, οἱ πρῶτοι at the end (with the article) are only to be understood as meaning —*those* last and first of whom I said at the beginning, *many* that are first shall be last. For there are certainly first who remain first, and last who remain last! The proposition—All the last become first, and all the first become the last—as if Christ had said this in the *οἱ*, is in no possible way to be justified.[2] The *difference of disposition* between those here represented as first and last, is the principal thing to which the οὕτως ἔσονται remains applicable.

The properly *limited sphere*, then, of the parable is the *warning* representation of such as are called with a real or seeming preference, and who thereupon do not renounce the eager anxiety for reward:—all that might be found in its details beyond this limit is erroneous. The application, however, to a merely *imagined* preference is certainly included; for it is in harmony with our Lord's manner to put such conceit to shame by conde-

[1] In what is here said lies the measure of truth which belongs to the principle laid down by Rudel, that the parables only figuratively represent the last judgment by way of warning; that here, therefore, as a sharp warning, the murmuring disposition which had just been exhibited by Peter, is represented as still the same in future, even at the last judgment. (Rudelb. und Guer. Zeitschrift 1851, 3.) Although we must still reject the consequences which Rudel draws from this view carried to an extreme, as tending to make the historico-dogmatical ground of the parable evaporate into what is merely practical and didactic.

[2] Although, as is well known, many (with whom Lisco agrees) have strangely attempted it.

Hosted by Google

scending as it were to allow its validity. The *object* of the parable is finally:

First, *to detect and put to shame* the evil mind; to demonstrate that such a hateful *envy* lies in the eager anxiety about reward. (Ver. 15.) There is a concealed envy of the favour shown to others; and the saying of the eldest son finds its repetition, alas! even in the circle of the disciples of Christ:—"What shall *we* have therefore?" Beneath this *we*, there lies hid as its evil motive a secret *we as in preference to others*—which the Lord here brings to light. "This parable hits even excellent people; nay, it terrifies the greatest saints; therefore Christ holds it up before the Apostles themselves." (Luther.) "How many shining stars have already been struck by the tail of the dragon, and cast down by pride to the earth!" (Rambach.) Herberger, rich in anecdote, brings a strikingly illustrative story into his sermon on this text,[1] which indeed strongly portrays that which our Lord here mildly represents, but still corresponds to the reality of the parable.

Secondly, there is then the keen and ever-needful *warning:* In such a spirit, thou, now among the first (even thou, Apostle Peter, if it remain in thee, and go on developing itself in thee), mayest at some future time take the *reward*, and yet lose eternal life;—worse than one who is *last*, thou mayest remain behind, and without, as a *last one* in the worst sense. (2 John 8.) For *this* is plainly declared by a final climax in the *second* saying, respecting the called and chosen, which is annexed to the first. Meanwhile let us reflect on this! We shall not at once conclude; but after this general survey consider the details, and thus arrive again at this decisive concluding verse.

Vers. 1, 2. God always goes out ἅμα πρωΐ, early in the morning, diligently preventing those whom He seeks.[2] At

[1] A monk died leaving a great name for sanctity; a robber, who had heard him preach, repented, ran to confess, but fell on the way and broke his neck. A devout man saw both, wept at the death of the saint, but rejoiced at that of the robber. Why so? "When the monk died, the devil took him because of his pride; when the robber broke his neck, angels received his penitent soul."

[2] In Jeremiah these words frequently occur:—"I have sent unto you, rising up early and sending."

Hosted by Google

the earliest dawn of the world did He begin to call such as Enoch and Abraham; long before there was any mention of cultivating a vineyard in the proper sense, had He uttered the word:—I am thy reward, walk before Me! This is not indeed directly meant here, but, pointing backwards, it is hinted. At all events we learn, from the first word, that it is not caprice on the part of God which calls the late ones so late. Many in preaching from this passage take erring pains to show that the compassion of the Lord (for it depends indeed upon this alone, not upon the willing or running of any one) takes effect in some sooner, in others later; and that of this difference in the "hours of grace" we have nothing more to say than, So it seems good in His sight, He has power to do what He will with His own. What truth there is in this is not taught here; the other side rather comes into prominence. If, on the other hand, we refer the first, third, sixth hours, etc., which are selected (with the omission of the intervening ones) to certain terms or epochs in the history of the world, and of an individual lifetime, when the call of grace goes forth more loudly and directly,—it is yet to be remembered that the same call also continues to sound through all the intervening times. Those who subsequently went into the vineyard had already been invited in the morning; they knew of the vineyard where work was to be had; and every one that stands at a disadvantage has himself to blame, because he was not there when God called, or disregarded His calling from one hour to another. This is the meaning of the parable, which will also be confirmed by the apparent contradiction in ver. 7. The *vineyard* may be traced to Is. v. (and still earlier to the Song of Solomon and Ps. lxxx.) as the similitude chosen and retained by Christ to denote God's institution upon earth, His people, His kingdom; the fruit of it is the most excellent, the labour in it is severe and difficult. The labourers correspond indeed in the *first place*, as we have already seen, to the husbandmen (Matt. xxi. 33); consequently, further, to the Apostles and their successors in office in Christendom, of course not precisely according to the outward official title, but according to their Divine calling. Yet the word "labourers" warrants further the general application, in so far as, in the vineyard, no one is allowed to remain idle or merely passive. The God who Himself alone prepares His people for Himself will yet have

Hosted by Google

fellow-workers (1 Cor. iii. 9), as well out of grace as according to that right which requires a *worthiness* for His kingdom;—a worthiness, however, different from a meritorious claim to reward. *Labourers* at all events—for although thou art not a gardener, but a *branch*, thou art yet a *living* branch, which is not merely the object of cultivation, but in its turn is to bring forth fruit. Hast thou no special commission out of thy house, thou hast at least in thy house (Mark v. 19; Acts xvi. 31), and wherever thou shouldst let thy light shine so as to save others along with thyself. He who entirely neglects the salvation of others will not be likely to attain his own. These are ideas which lie in the background, and do not contradict the main reference to labourers in the more limited sense. Let no one boast of his labour, but praise the rich householder who so kindly cares for the poor; let us know nothing else than what we are wont to say:—The gracious Lord hath *given me employment.* He promises the due reward, the *denarius* (which, also in Tacitus, still appears as the usual ample day's wage for working soldiers); but gives infinitely more than this to the faithful who willingly labour for Him, and are diligent. But if those who are called at the very first begin distrustfully to ask, How much am I certain to get?—then indeed they are in an evil way, and are to be warned of the unhappy end of such a course.

Vers. 3–7. The next going out at the third hour πληθούσης ἀγορᾶς (as also ἀγορᾶς πληθώρα occurs) denotes precisely the time when the ἀγόραιοι, or gaping idlers, are to be found. So far as this particular in the human parable can correspond to any higher truth, it finely maintains by this interval of three hours the medium between an undue zeal on the Lord's part, leading Him to be ever running after labourers as if He needed them, and a neglect that cares not for the people who need Him. We see evidently from the whole what is the aim of the master of the vineyard; every expression that might speak of his need is carefully avoided, while, on the other hand, the idleness of the fools is in a kindly manner rebuked. Go ye *also* into *the* vineyard;—these words presuppose that the others had heard the first calling, or had heard of it; it is spoken of as a thing known; and in the "also," which sets before them the example of those who had gone previously, it is mildly hinted as a fault that they are standing idle. The market place of the world is opposed to

Hosted by Google

the vineyard of the kingdom of God; the greatest man of business in worldly things is yet only an idle starer, so long as he will not enter upon the true labour, which alone is of any value, which alone brings its reward.[1] The promise, *Whatsoever is right I will give you,* contains in the background likewise a hint at the penny, as if it were said,—Go ye also (now at least); I will not count the time lost, but give to *you also* a full day's hire, as is due (only to the others). Or might we say, The Lord Himself means by the word only what the reckoners could understand by it, namely, the part of the penny corresponding to the proportion of hours.[2] Hardly; if we interpret this in the light of the subsequent development! The indefinite form of the promise implies at the same time even a higher degree of kindness, even more than the first contract, and contains the true answer to the question of Peter, with which every one ought to be satisfied—Only serve the good Lord, it will assuredly do thee no hurt! The later labourers really trust more, they are ashamed of their idleness, and are contented that they are permitted to enter at all. From the ninth hour till the evening, when work ceases, would be once more the same interval of time; but the faithful and good Lord cannot refrain from even yet offering a last term for *one* last hour. Those whom He now finds are of course somewhat more pointedly rebuked: Why stand ye, why *have ye stood* all the day idle? Why have ye despised all the former calls, and, as much as in you lies, will actually lose the whole day and the last hour, and thus bring a heavy penalty upon yourselves—if ye do not now take what I offer to you? Now there comes an excuse:—No one hath hired us! A wonderfully bold speech! seeing that the lord of the vineyard has been calling from early morning, and has now, truly not without justice, charged them with idleness. Christ will certainly represent this excuse as groundless and hypocritical; for before God it will not be held valid. In the eye of man it indeed appears otherwise; *we* say rightly of many, Ah,

[1] This is precisely what Rupprecht means when he finds here a designation of those "who, in reference to the kingdom of heaven, have yet done nothing." Why then should the market, as "the place where the idle people stand," *not* signify the *world?* Let us not, after modern fashion, be too nice in determining biblical, parabolical representations!

[2] As the Jews (see Lightfoot Horæ Talmud.) pay differently the שׂכיר יום and שׂכיר שׁעות—those who are hired by the day, and by the *hour.*

Hosted by Google

if they had only been called earlier! No one has invited them, education has been wanting to them, they have been surrounded with bad company, perhaps even those who should have worked favourably upon their souls have been false teachers and destroyers. When such a one is called, *i. e.*, when first he distinctly hears the Divine call, it is even natural for himself to think,—No one has hitherto hired me; now, for the first time, light rises upon me. But when the light shines more clearly, and the call sinks deeper into his heart, he will no longer thus justify his cause, but rather take blame to himself. He will see and acknowledge that God had called him even from the first, that he had gone out of the way of Him who called when he saw Him coming,—in short, that the blame lies on himself alone. Only the poor heathen (in that first reference from which the parable started) may, with any semblance of right, still excuse themselves; no baptized and confirmed Christian, no man amongst us who has learned the ten commandments, and the Lord's prayer, or has ever heard a church bell, will be able to say,—No one has hired or invited me! Still, in order to teach us that God's goodness will certainly do injustice to no one who might in any measure be able to excuse himself, Christ frames the parable so as to make the householder kindly overlook the pretext almost as if he admitted its force; and in the promise, which to the last is the same, only slightly touches the conscience:—"Go ye *also* into the vineyard, *i.e.*, like those who have already gone; as ye know that I have often already thus called at the market place. Why, then, have ye disregarded the call?" Thus does God, in His abounding goodness, call kindly to the last; He calls the people only *not* to remain *idle;* and those here represented as last are such as enter upon the work merely from shame, which at length seizes them, and without much asking about the hire. They feel, indeed, what their idleness even to the last hour has deserved, and that if they are allowed to work at all it is only of grace; they trust the good Lord, and are far from thinking,—The day of labour is now almost as good as past, there will be no wages for the last hour. We learn here, also, that even for the last hour there may be a superabundant recompense. The *eleventh hour* is still a precious hour of grace. To many it is evidently the last solemn hour of de-

Hosted by Google

cision; while, to us all, it is at least uncertain at every call whether our last hour may not have come.

Vers. 8–11. Every one who will receive wages must work, though it be only one hour; but the labour does not continue always; at the longest it lasts only one day, which is followed by the evening when all labour closes. That, in paying the labourers, the Lord gives orders to begin at the last, signifies in the first place,—Give ample payment in general without respect and distinction! Then, however, from consideration of the labourers, and knowledge of their state of mind, He already, in His wisdom, sums all up in two classes, *last* and *first;* although there are, so to speak, five different gradations: it is supposed that all represent themselves either presumingly as first, or humbly as last. But since what pleases the Lord is only the humility which He would test and prove, in order afterwards to reward with something much better than the penny, He inverts the false order of precedency set up by His people; He already prophetically intimates what is to happen, by giving the last the first place, and the first the last; but He enjoins, at the same time, that as regards the penny no one, from the beginning to the end, is to be omitted. The diligence and zeal of *these* last here, who receive the whole day's hire, is, moreover, self-evident; and, so far, *what they get is really due to them*, according to the alone valid claim of grace. "So in our own times it has been maintained by a rationalist theology (in a thoroughly Jewish spirit), that the sinner can never repair the neglects of which he has been guilty in the period before his conversion; the loss of time follows the converted person, even into eternity, in an irreparable abridgment of his happiness. But this parable seems framed with a special view of overthrowing such a delusion. It belongs precisely to the majesty of grace that it can restore to the sinner from the bosom of its eternity even the time that, without it, would be irrecoverably lost." (Lange.) Yes; even on our side, a certain truth subjectively corresponds to this, because it may be said, "A single true faithful moment and an entire lifetime, the right true earnest will and the act, are, according to the scale of eternal grace, the same." (Schubert.) The faithful first ones of the right stamp know that full well, and do not vex themselves with envy. But others are here represented who murmur. They are called absolutely *the first*, and not, in

Hosted by Google

express antithesis to the last, *those that were hired early in the morning;* for the intermediate labourers, who came at the third and sixth hour, may reckon themselves comparatively among the first. (Comp. chap. xxv. 10, "those who were ready"—leaving it quite undetermined whether it applied to any of the foolish virgins.) Suffice to say, that what exactly fulfils the contract now appears to them to be not just, and that merely through comparison with the others; if these others get a penny, even for their hour, they foolishly think that they must receive more, at least a penny for every hour they had worked. It is an evil circumstance that instead of expressing thanks they murmur at the very time they are receiving their wages; but it is still worse that they murmur against the *householder*, whose bountiful *goodness* they have just witnessed, but without feeling and joy because that goodness was shown towards *others!* Here we have selfishness and envy in all its hateful nakedness! If the others had only received a farthing, *then* they would have been content! Hateful, most hateful!

Vers. 12–15. And yet the spirit which Christ here brings to light, in the insolent words of the pretendedly first, is to be found in the hearts of all who are intent on reward, and filled with self-righteousness. They look proudly down on "these last," without knowing what was in their heart; place themselves in lofty comparison with them, and daringly accuse the gracious householder of being unjust. Observe here the ἐποίησαν and ἐποίησας, the echo of the same word, which cannot be translated. The first ἐποίησαν is thoroughly in the calculating sense: these have earned, deserved, wrought an hour's wages. They themselves have borne the *burden* of the day, and the *heat* (τὸν καύσωνα, the scorching wind),—the labour properly so called, and, in addition to this, the fatigue from without (Gen. xxxi. 40); but with all this they have done no more than was due from them, no more than they knew before they would have to do. Viewed more deeply—though this the parable could only indicate—the Lord might well have replied to them, Are ye then become so bitter? How *unwillingly*, then, have ye laboured![1] But the

[1] Luther gives the following turn to this part of the parable: "The day and the heat must be understood not of the time, but with reference to the conscience; therefore as signifying, that the legally righteous go through great and heavy labour, *i.e.*, they go through it with a burdened conscience

Hosted by Google

householder, who was good to the idle ones who sought to excuse themselves, continues to be kind even to these; he addresses them in a way that might shame them, as if he actually needed to justify himself. To *one* among them "who was more ungracious than the rest" (as Bahrdt once expressed it)—we conceive this must be Peter, the spokesman; the spirit, which he showed a little while before, being exhibited in its natural consequence—he addresses words which first fill up the measure of goodness; but which, on that account, all the more keenly pierce. His payment is given to him; but with it the ὕπαγε. The Lord condescendingly places Himself, as it were, on a level with the servant; yet this *friendly* ἑταῖρε (good friend) has in it an essential tone of irony.[1] I do thee no wrong, I give thee what is *thine;* consider only, *thou hast already received it.*[2] If we go beyond the limits of the parable (*whither it is designed to draw us, even in its very limitation, as every parable properly does*), the Lord might say:—Even were I now to withhold from thee that is "*thine*" on account of thy murmuring, and to give it to that one (as chap. xxv. 28–29), I should still do thee no wrong! He says, however, only:—I will

and an unwilling heart." Lange: "The labour has become hard to them, the burden and heat of the day is what they chiefly remember in looking back upon it." Very good, but we do not understand how the same Lange can yet make out that these people are saved; but that they are "*more legal*, more *calculating* natures, whose capacity for blessedness is not of wide compass." We confess not to be able to find a place for these comparatives under our alternative, according to the analogy of Rom. xi. 6.

[1] Roos understands it as "seriously meant and with a tone of alienation,"—but how so? It must in that case (which cannot be proved) have been a common form of address, like our "good friend!" Non vocabulum benevolentiæ et amicitiæ, sed *notitiæ*," as Herberger cites; but how do we know that? See again Matt. xxvi. 50.

[2] That (according to Steffensen) these grumblers who were first had contemptuously let the penny lie untouched, is certainly not true. Therefore neither will it do to explain the meaning thus: "If they took it (even now when advised to do so) repentingly, then at that very moment from being πρῶτοι they became ἔσχατοι; but if they refused to take it, then it was just their pretended merit that was to blame for their losing the reward intended for them." Against this we quote the words of Münchmeyer in opposition to Besser: "It is said here in words too plain and unambiguous to be misunderstood: The first *received* also each his penny; and when they *received* it (therefore took it, had taken it), they murmured against the householder." (Luther. Zeitschrift 1851, 4.)

Hosted by Google

be *gracious*—I will give to this one who is last of all, τούτῳ τῷ ἐσχάτῳ, the same as to thee. He who has not laboured at all, who has rejected my last call, receives indeed nothing at all but the punishment of the self-willed idlers at another term of payment; but this one deserves his wages, in my view, even more than thou; therefore am I good to him, while I must be angry with thee. (David's booty was to be divided even among those who remained by the stuff,—is not this the custom and law in Israel, since 1 Sam. xxx. 25?) Art thou, then, a true servant if thou wilt prescribe to thy lord? Is my good will to yield to thy evil will, so that it is not permitted to me to be gracious? Wilt thou forbid me? Be ashamed! Even what I have just called τὸ σὸν remains still ἐν τοῖς ἐμοῖς, and that I *gave* thee work was only an act of my grace and kindness! I do wrong to no one, not to thee, who art to learn the true *suum cuique* in the apparent inequality. For hirelings such as thou, enviers such as thou, I can have no further use in my house and vineyard, for I will have real ἑταίρους, who understand and learn my mind, who are happy in my goodness; only for this have I called you all, not for the sake of the work. Is thine eye *evil*[1] when, and because, I am *good?* With this keen question, in which everything is said, he is *dismissed* and now stands without, eternally envious at the happiness of the last, which he, as first, has forfeited;—if indeed this final judgment does not throw him down on his knees in deepest shame, and make him pray: O Lord forgive me, and receive me yet as the unworthiest and the last.

Ver. 16.—The entire parable—with the saying from which it sets out, and which it is meant to interpret—leaves still undecided whether the result in the case of all *such* first ones is that they absolutely remain without.[2] But that the parable with its *warning* is intended to reach thus far, is immediately proved by the second saying which is subjoined to it; in which a step is taken beyond the sphere of the parable, or rather in which by *keeping fast hold* of the ὕπαγε, it first receives the deepest interpretation of its meaning. The direct inference is: —*Therefore, i.e.*, by the fault of their own evil disposition,—and hence justly,—those first whom I mean and have here

[1] עַיִן רָע of envy, Prov. xxiii. 6, comp. xxii. 9.

[2] And in *this* sense might be said, what Herberger suggests in the wrong place, between vers. 14 and 15, "here the parable ceases."

Hosted by Google

denoted shall become last.[1] This, however, does not stand first, but again, in order graciously to recommend humility, it is,—The last shall be first! *In this* has Christ joy, *this* is what we are rather to keep before us. Scarcely, however, is this said, when there follows, by a closely connecting *for*, the very difficult saying about the *called* and *chosen*, which chap. xxii. 1–14 explains clearly by a new parable. As in that parable those who are called in vain consist partly of such as do not come at all,—such as despise the call,—partly of those who come falsely, who venture to the wedding-table in their own garments, with still greater contempt of the royal robe of honour,—so here the κλητοί (which imports more than merely κεκλημένοι, chap. xxii. 3–8) are such as really enter into covenant and labour, make a beginning in the service of God (not indeed in a pure spirit), but who are afterwards found to be not *worthy*, not able to stand the test. And certainly in this parable they are the rejected, the not-blessed; by no means (as Lange laboriously proves) the less blessed, having less capacity of blessedness. So much, however, is clear and certain,—as from the two parables here and at chap. xxii., so further, from the whole Scripture —that it is not God's arbitrary decree which makes the ἐκλεκτούς, but that *every one* who is called can, and may, and should himself make sure the election thereby offered to him. (Rom. xi. 28, 29; 2 Pet. i. 10.) *Chosen*—this is the last admonishing word of the parable, in which it sounds forth its full meaning and aim; this is the thorn which it would leave in our hearts. *Few* shall in the end come off as chosen—this is what Christ

[1] "As regards the parable, it is self-evident that *all* the first in it become last, as it was intended only to show by an example how the first *might* become last, and the last first; therefore it was not necessary to speak of any exception in the story of the parable. Hence, also, the saying at ver. 16 is different only in words, by no means in sense, from chap. xix. 30; it is used here precisely because it connects so closely with the parable, in which *only such* first as actually became last are spoken of, and *vice versa*." In this Rupprecht agrees with Steffensen, who, in like manner, says rightly: "Thus, *as is represented in the parable*, shall the last, *i.e.*, all who esteem themselves last, be reckoned, before God, or with respect to the *inheritance of eternal life*, as first; while the first, *i.e.*, all who think themselves first, shall be last before God. For election, or the being saved, is by no means given with the calling; he who has been actually called to salvation *may lose* the election by proud self-exaltation."

Hosted by Google

says here, as everywhere, from Matt. vii. 13, 14. (The *many* last who shall be first is quite consistent with this as spoken in a different relation altogether.) Few, that is, in comparison with the multitude of the rejected, of the last, or those who remain behind in the worst sense. That, even among *these* rejected ones, there will be such as long served sourly and discontentedly for the penny, and receive this too, but do *not* receive, in and with this penny, eternal life—this is most undeniably the mightily warning truth which was here to be testified. This truth, and with it the whole parable, is completely mistaken by those who so interpret as to find in ver. 16 only this, that in the kingdom of God there will, in the end, be *no difference* between the first and the last!! Which entirely mistaken idea Rudel at last, with well-meaning ingenuity, carries to a climax when he says: "The first in heaven will *also* be last, and the last first, *according as it is viewed!!*" This is to corrupt and pervert the clear text by over-acuteness! The truth is this:—God will regard all who, up till the period of decision, have not renounced their envious eagerness for reward, as not belonging to His heaven; and having paid them with their (in that case perishable) reward, will reject them.

THIRD ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUFFERING. ANSWER TO THE TWO SONS OF ZEBEDEE.

(Matt. xx. 18–28; Mark x. 33–45; Luke xviii. 31–33.)

The indiscreet request of the two disciples for places of honour, preferred at so unseasonable a time (τότε, ver. 20), just when Christ is again prophesying of His sufferings, gives Him occasion to address a proper reply to the two disciples; and, in like manner, again more specifically to tell the other ten what properly the fact of His going before through suffering to glory had already intimated. Thus arises again a connected testimony concerning the way to honour through lowliness, to greatness through humility (as in chap. xviii.), or concerning the true relation between lowliness and greatness in the kingdom of God. First of all there is the great truth which, for the disciples as

Hosted by Google

for us all, is so hard to be admitted, the fundamental principle of the kingdom, universally valid alike for the Head and the members, viz., *Through suffering to glory!* (Luke xxiv. 26). Christ Himself voluntarily goes before in this way (vers. 18, 19), and His disciples are at liberty to go by no other. Their over-curious inquiry after another way here specially presents itself in the form of an ambitious, grasping desire of special glory above others, ver. 21. Our Lord rebukes the want of understanding which does not connect with that glory the sufferings of the Forerunner, those sufferings not yet being understood;—and then points out the only true way, ver. 22, 23. The general fellowship in the sufferings of Christ belongs to all, and leads also to the general fellowship in His glory; special preference, however, is no matter of arbitrary distribution before the time, but of the eternal decree in which it is prepared for the individuals who are to receive it. What, therefore, is the principle which for the present obtains in the kingdom of Christ? It is only this,—In serving consists true *ruling*, in humility true *greatness!* In opposition to the twofold principle in the kingdoms of this world, namely, to rule by the use of power, and by greater power to exalt oneself above others (ver. 25)—comes here the similar, twofold fundamental principle of the kingdom of Christ for His followers (vers. 26, 27),—whom *He indeed goes before* as the highest example in the renunciation of His power and honour, in the giving up of Himself for many. Thus, at ver. 28, the conclusion of the discourse again returns to the beginning of the intimation concerning His sufferings.

Vers. 18, 19. This is now the *third* open prediction which our Lord has made of His sufferings, since that which occurred at Caesarea Philippi; and it was followed by only one more last announcement, two days before the Passover (chap. xxvi. 2). Already (previous to what is here recorded) had the raising of Lazarus taken place; the enmity of Jerusalem—of the "Jews" who were represented in that word—had risen to an official decree of murder; the great conflict of the Holy One with sinners,—from which, according to the prophecy of the high priest, was to issue in the saving, atoning death of the One for all,—approached its crisis. The Captain and Forerunner of our salvation goes before, resolved upon the way of suffering; this St Mark, ver. 32, prophetically indicates by selecting the expres-

Hosted by Google

sion ἦν προάγων αὐτούς—or rather, records His literal walking before them at that time, as a specific expression and symbol of His going before them in the way of suffering. To this he adds, quite as significantly, that the disciples *were amazed;* they were filled with astonishment and anxiety at the Master's *courage* in going to death (comp. John xi. 16); and were *afraid* for themselves who were to follow Him,—who now actually followed Him with such fear.[1] Upon this He stands still, calls the hesitating ones encouragingly to Him (Mark πάλιν as at chap. ix. 31), and begins again, expressly and without concealment, to tell them *the things that were about to happen* with all particularity of detail. This He must do as a testimony that He knew it beforehand as the Father's counsel according to the Scripture, and that He freely undertook it;—as a gracious provision that the weak ones, when now it is about to take place, may not entirely lose heart and confidence in Him;—and to point to the fact of His leading the way upon which His disciples are to follow Him. He names *Jerusalem*, in which, and nowhere else, His suffering is ordained and prepared to take place (Luke xiii. 33); and in the *we* He again indicates what He had often declared before, and is shortly afterwards again to declare, that they too are to follow Him, and have fellowship with Him in this. For the rest, His words are only a more exact and detailed repetition of what is said at chap. xvi. 21, xvii. 22, 23, in which latter passage we have already noticed the twofold *delivering up* which is here mentioned. Here it is not merely to be killed, but to be *judicially condemned* to death;—not merely to be delivered up to "men," but to the *Gentiles*, the Romans, who, as opposed to the Jews, represented the whole Gentile world. The πολλὰ παθεῖν is carried out into its most significant details:—the being *mocked*, in which His kingly honour is made a ground of *ignominy* (in St Luke ὑβρισθήσεται, as explaining what severity of wanton ill-treatment was involved in this act of mockery, in St Mark and St Luke there is also the consummated ignominy of being *spit upon*);—then the being *scourged*, following in all legal form, and the being *crucified*;—in which lie most properly His sufferings of the flesh, in their pain and *anguish* even to

[1] Ἀκολουθοῦντες ἐφοβοῦντο can hardly mean merely, *On the way* they became ever more afraid! Ἀκολουθεῖν has like προάγειν more significance here.

Hosted by Google

the *death*.[1] All in succession, just as it happened during the last three days; and for the third time also is announced the *rising again* on the third day! St Luke preserves the important additional clause which points in all this to the fulfilment of the Scripture: All things that are written of the Son of Man by the Holy Ghost in the prophets[2] shall and must be accomplished; consequently, before His glory His sufferings must be fulfilled (which the fools cannot find or read in the Scripture); —the one as certainly as the other. Of His being mocked, spit upon, and scourged, it is plainly written in Is. l. 6. Of the *cross* the Scripture spoke in types, such as the brazen serpent, and other ways of which we are not now called to speak particularly; —of His being delivered up to the Gentiles we may read in the עֲדַת מְרֵעִים Ps. xxii. 16;[3] and in other places, perhaps, if our eyes were opened rightly to read.

St Luke says, without tautology, very emphatically,—"But they understood none of these things;" *i.e.*, from want of understanding and unwillingness of heart, they could and would understand nothing of *these* things, nothing of this *matter;* therefore was the whole ῥῆμα, the entire *saying*, hid from them, *i.e.*, its particular *words*, plain as they were.[4] A proof of this is immediately fur-

[1] How Lange (ii. 3, 1148) finds here "three fundamental forms of temporal *death*, every preceding one of which ought rightly to *exclude* that which follows," I do not understand. Was not the scourging the beginning of the crucifixion "according to human law?" What reason was there why one who had been mocked must not also be judged or condemned? Braune observes more correctly the *gradation* in this trilogy:—First, the being mocked, as the comparatively gentle beginning (although, along with the being spit upon, it was already severe enough); then the bodily ill-usage (according to law); then the shameful death.

[2] The Dat. τῷ υἱῷ not to be construed with τελεσθήσεται (fulfilled in Him), but written, prescribed, ordained *for Him;* properly and precisely *pointing to Him*, so as that He should look upon Himself in the light of what is thus written, and accommodate Himself to it.

[3] In which case what was said in my Commentary on this Psalm is retracted; since עֲדָה may be used by catachresis, and the מְרֵעִים may indicate the ἀνόμους in the proper sense, with whom the προσπηγνύναι, Acts ii. 23, is connected quite as directly as at Ps. xxii. the כַּאֲרִי; which refers to this, notwithstanding the objections of recent expositors.

[4] Only a little differently from Lange (Stud. u. Krit. 1839. i. 44), who would understand by ῥῆμα the "whole *matter* which remained an enigma to them." He afterwards (in Leben Jesu i. 257) repeats this, but

Hosted by Google

nished in the request of the two sons of Zebedee, who now too hastily catch at the *rising again* which was before missed, and whose inquiry seems to emanate from the spirit and views of the disciples denoted in Luke xix. 11. What wavering hither and thither between affrighted horror at the sufferings and inquisitive grasping at the glory,—because they could not understand both in their connection!—The question here presents itself whether it was *the mother* of the sons of Zebedee (of the father we know nothing further, but the mother's name, according to Matt. xxvii. 56, Mark xv. 40, was Salome) who preferred the request, or the sons themselves. Here, of course, the more exact account of St Matthew is to be preferred; and St Mark, who generally abridges, only conceives of them as having spoken through the medium of their mother, just as in St Matthew also Christ addresses the sons in His reply. It was then, at all events, *their* request; but it may still be asked whether the thought originated with her. This is certainly probable, as she takes the lead in the speech; the sons had become only less bold, not wiser, by the instructions they had received from the Master (chap. xviii. 1; xix. 30). The question came from the mother, and sprung originally from flesh and blood; but it found its echo in the flesh and blood of the children. For, as Luther's marginal gloss, which almost every one cites, here runs,—"the flesh is always for becoming glorious ere it is crucified, exalted ere it is humbled." John, at least, is perfectly satisfied now, as always, with the thought of retaining the nearest place beside his Lord in glory; and in that case it is no matter to him whether it be on the right hand or the left. Did the mother—whose "these my two sons" affords so true a specimen of those maternal wishes and maternal demands, in which self is transferred to the children—think here of the preference already given to the two disciples with Peter (who is now to fall behind them, and be

at last (ii. 3, 1148) comes to my interpretation, viz., "the meaning of the saying." Hamann (i. 484) distinguishes between τὸ ῥῆμα and τὰ λεγόμενα—"what He *said* and what He would *give* them *to understand*." As also Sepp: "And they could not comprehend what He would *thereby say*"—which then, at all events, would be no mere tautological amplification." Less successful appears to us, on the other hand, Alford's exegesis of the οὐδὲν τούτων: neither the suffering nor the resurrection;—for in the ταῦτα there is no separation.

Hosted by Google

separated from them!)—or did she think of the surname *sons of thunder*, which had been given to them (Mark iii. 17)—or of her own special claim as one who had constantly followed Christ (Mark xv. 41)—or of her relationship to Him (certainly unauthenticated) as the sister of Joseph, his foster-father?[1] All this we do not know, and it would be of little consequence if we did know it; we are to look upon it in the same light in which our Lord did, as in any case an expression and example of a forward ambition on the part of His disciples. Not content with each having one of the twelve thrones, chap. xix. 28 (something like the thrones of the house of David, Ps. cxxii. 5), these two disciples will even have seats on the right hand and on the left! There is something praiseworthy, notwithstanding, in the *frankness*, as also in the humility, which, with all the pride of the wish, marks the *prayer* (Mark δὸς ἡμῖν); and in the strong faith which would even now have exchanged any place of honour in the presence of Herod or Cæsar for fellowship with Christ; which so confidently reckons on the approaching *glory* of Him who was now humbled; and which recognises the allotment of highest dignity and power as dependent on one word of His pleasure: εἰπὲ ἵνα καθίσωσιν. There yet remains enough of what is evil in the motive that dictated the wish. There was wanting to it only the bold temerity of assigning to themselves these places of honour on the right hand and the left,—in which case the Lord would have much more sharply rebuked it than in His kindness He at first does. True, He afterwards, in terms of rebuke, rejects those who *seek to be first;* but His answer begins in milder terms,—*Ye know not* what ye ask. At the very outset He addresses to them the question which is amplified in the somewhat different representation of Mark (ver. 36), *What wilt thou? What will ye?* Very improperly,—and not so modestly as Bathsheba in 1 Kings ii. 20, with her "one small petition,"[2]—is Christ here required to promise

[1] According to an ancient supposition. The newest hypothesis of Wieseler, which makes Salome to be the sister of Jesus' mother, we shall afterwards dismiss (on John xix. 26, 27, the third Word from the Cross).

[2] Although (as Braune observes) the request of Bathsheba may be compared with that here preferred by the disciples in this, that when one is not sure of his case he desires the promise beforehand.

Hosted by Google

beforehand the indefinite *whatsoever*. This He never does in such cases; first we must distinctly ask, and then He applies the truth to our want of understanding, and corrects it.

Vers. 22, 23. We always, properly speaking, know not what we ask, so long as it is not the Holy Spirit who teaches us to ask. Rom. viii. 26. We understand not the Lord's prayer which is on our lips; the ignorance of the flesh, and the pride of our own spirit, ever secretly prays: "Give Thy kingdom *to us*, let *us* become something special in Thy kingdom!" when we ought simply to say, "Let *Thy* kingdom come to us all upon earth!" In this general sense of the first word of sad and gentle rebuke lies a more definite application to the two disciples: Ye know, understand, and consider not *what* belongs to the becoming great and glorious in My kingdom; and that while *ye* are thinking only of special pre-eminence in honour, ye have, in asking for this, ignorantly asked for special pre-eminence in ignominy and pain (such places as those of the thieves who were crucified along with Christ, as Lange supposes that Christ has these in His mind here)—for this is the real relation in which these things stand to each other. In general, all glory to be attained in My kingdom is preceded by the condition of suffering; and as regards this there arises the serious question, Can and will ye also have this? Is it not true, also, that in merely human relations every honour has its burden;—"might not the possessors of those honours that are most coveted and striven after upon earth, say to those who envy or desire them, Can ye bear the duties and cares, the appendage that inseparably connects itself with this enjoyment?"[1] There are royal cups of all sorts, difficult baptisms, or consecrations and preparations for high rank. Prov. xv. 33. Here, however, our Lord speaks of a *cup* and a *baptism* which are indispensable in order to glory, as for Himself, so also for all His followers and friends. Even although, in St Matthew, the second clause about the baptism (which, however, St Mark also indisputably has) were a later interpolation, it would still be merely the proper restoration of an omission. Christ certainly said both; for the cup and baptism together form two

[1] Nitzsch's sermon on this text (third Selection); in which, with great acuteness, he interprets its universal application, and shows that the Saviour knew how to cure His disciples of ambitious wishes.

Hosted by Google

ideas mutually supplementary. The *baptism* in this double idea is even the more distinctively important, is the decisive thing, and that which is so significantly referred to in the whole subsequent *doctrine of the Apostles* and the *discipline of the Church*. To drink the cup—is said chiefly of the beginning made by the Forerunner; baptism applies chiefly to us who follow in His fellowship.

It is not then as if the baptism were intended to indicate only a greater measure of sufferings to be poured out on Him; for, in opposition to this, it might be affirmed with a certain truth, that the cup in Gethsemane, as the crisis of resolution, was more severe to the Redeemer than the consummation of the baptism on Calvary. But both are essentially the same sufferings viewed in a different aspect. First of all, the cup points to something that is to be *inwardly* tasted or experienced; while the baptism denotes the same thing as also overpowering us *from without*. Consequently, the former expresses rather the personal undertaking of a resolute voluntary *obedience, i.e.*, precisely the *drinking;* hence the expression is afterwards retained especially to denote the alone perfect obedience of the Forerunner. The latter speaks rather of the imposed necessity of patient endurance, of the *being* baptized (as in no possible sense can any one baptize himself); hence, again, this expression passes over to us, although, in Luke xii. 50, Christ thus designates the holy Δεῖ imposed upon Himself as the decree of the Father.[1] Finally, as the cup points backward to the ordaining will of the Father, so there lies in the baptism a hint pointing forwards to the not remaining under the water, to the coming forth and rising again. It is, therefore, the second idea—that of baptism—which first completes the sense of the whole: viz., that of renewing consecration, a previous putting off of what is old, in order to a power and authority granted only in this way. Luke xii. 49, 50. *Both* expressions are drawn from a profound knowledge of Scripture symbols; the former, especially, is found in manifold anticipation throughout the Old Testament. Nowhere does Scripture allude to a cup of poison or medicine to be drunk; but the origin of the

[1] Which parallel passage refutes Braune's otherwise unfounded distinction,—that the cup was given to Christ specially by the Father, the baptism brought upon Him by *men*.

Hosted by Google

figure is to be sought in passages such as Ps. xi. 6, מְנָת כּוֹסָם, Ps. xvi. 5, מְנָת־חֶלְקִי וְכוֹסִי, according to which a share of the repast is allotted and handed to any one. We then find in the Old Testament mention made of various cups; of a salutary cup of suffering, of a cup of fury, and—of a cup in which both of these ingredients are in a certain measure united. When it is said in Is. li. 17, that Jerusalem has drunk at the hand of the Lord of the cup of His fury, the cup of trembling, and forthwith is restored as a holy and glorious Zion (chap. lii. 1),—this, according to the profound import and connection of the prophecy of Isaiah, is precisely that cup of suffering and of the cross which all the people of God, whose head Christ is, must drink, and to which all the typical and preparatory sufferings of Israel belong. Ps. lx. 5–7. This is always a כּוֹס יְשׁוּעוֹת, *a cup of salvation*, which is to be viewed as a benefit, a saving disciplinary correction from the Lord, Ps. cxvi. 12, 13, a מוּסַר שְׁלוֹם, *the chastisement of peace*, Is. liii. 5, which issues finally only in salvation. In opposition to this stands the cup of anger and rejection, which neither Christ drinks nor His followers, but the unbelieving and the condemned. Ps. lxxv. 9; Ez. xxiii. 31; Rev. xiv. 10. Yet there is also in the cup of grace a taste of the salutary judicial anger, of the fury that burns hotly against sin:—this was exhibited in Christ; as it is still in His followers; and as it is also in rejected Israel (and this is a biblical idea of fundamental importance in order to the understanding of Isaiah and all the prophets), which continues to present, against its knowledge and will, a final historical *type* of its Messiah. It is for this that they live as a people, that they may repeat in themselves on a large scale the sufferings of Christ under wrath and desertion; until, at the appointed time, they turn again, as it is written in Rom. xi. 15, from the same point of view. *Hence* we so often read in the Old Testament of a bitter potion, and a grievous cup on account of sin (Jer. viii. 14, ix. 15), in which there is yet, at the same time, a gracious visitation; hence we read so often of a similarity between the judgment of Israel and the judgment of the heathen (Jer. xxv. 15–29; comp. Ez. ix. 6; 1 Pet. iv. 17; 1 Sam. iv. 21, 22), which yet is no similarity; for Jerusalem awakes again, and its sufferings, through fellowship with Christ's *atoning sufferings*, have become *sufferings of restoration*. We may perceive at

Hosted by Google

least, from these hints, to what a pervading symbolical usage in the prophetical writings Christ's words here point back, when He speaks of His sufferings as a *cup* to be drunk; when He thereby discloses that He will take upon Himself all that sinful man, all that Israel, has to suffer *in order to salvation* (not their final condemnation!); that fundamentally in Himself the truth is to be confirmed and essentially fulfilled,—that cup of wrath is to become a cup of salvation. And thus we may observe that even the cup points to the new blessing and the new life, of which the baptism more distinctly speaks.

For this second word (which is not to be associated with the idea of a "fire-baptism" of suffering; for in Matt. iii. 11, it is the fire of the Holy Ghost, and in Luke xii. 49, 50, the water evidently stands opposed to it) the point of departure lies in the figure and example of floods that drown, Ps. xlii. 7, lxix. 2, cxxiv. 4. As the drinking of the cup is a painful *suffering*, a tasting of the zeal of God's holiness against the sin of the world, so this suffering consummates itself as a suffering *of death* (Heb. ii. 9) in the baptism; for, to be baptized is to go down and die. Upon *this* fundamental signification the command of God to John made the baptism of repentance to rest; in which the principal thing is by no means the cleansing, which only comes in addition, but the typified dying of the old man. This first type more nearly approximates to its truth when Christ Himself, who is to baptize with spirit and fire, *i.e.*, life and power, first goes down into Jordan, into the water of death, in order to show how it becomes Him to fulfil all righteousness for us, and us in Him. What, however, is here as yet only a prophesying symbol, becomes a reality in His death upon the cross. The *cross* of Christ, in the full sense of the word, is His baptism, which now becomes ours; and in this fellowship of His sufferings and dying we too drink *all* of His cup. What our Lord says to the sons of Zebedee contains the kernel and germ of all the apostolic doctrine, as expressed, for example, in Rom. vi., and gives the innermost signification of the two *sacraments* of His church, by which it is incorporated and united with Him. 1 Cor. xii. 13. In our case, indeed, it is in the inverted order: Christ alone began by His absolutely drinking of the cup, before that cup became baptism to Him; we, on the contrary, must first enter into the fellowship and communication of His baptism, before we can

Hosted by Google

have the right and the power to drink of His cup in voluntary faith. "*Ye* shall drink of My cup," etc.;—in these words we are not to seek any special prophecy of special martyrdom in the case of *John* and *James*,[1] but must understand them thus:—Ye shall *indeed* drink, as it is appointed to all; *but*, as to special honours and preferences, the matter is different from what ye imagine. Let all false dogmatic teaching which satisfies itself with the formal imputation of the sufferings of Christ, without a real entering into fellowship with Him, ask how it can dispose of the Redeemer's former saying about *His* cross being intended for all, from which what He here says of *His* cup and *His* baptism is, in like manner, to be explained as intended for all—not to speak of the entire doctrine of the Apostles on this point. Only this remains as a settled and highly important truth:—I drink first, I am first baptized; ye can drink only by the strength that has been gained, the right that has been won, by Him who has gone before, and has opened up the way.

Can ye? This question requires, therefore, a twofold answer. *As Thou, Lord, in our own strength—never!* But faith in Him who has said, Ye shall drink and be baptized—answers with a joyful and trembling *We can.* The Yes of the disciples here is not yet this latter, for it anticipates ere Christ has decided, and is also for the most part to be understood only from Luke xviii. 34. It may be very much doubted whether, as Meyer thinks, they understood the figure literally, in its good sense, of the cup and basin of the King used at meals (Luke xxii. 30; Mark vii. 4); for, as Olshausen rightly observes, the testing question, *Can ye*, indicated not an honour, but something hard and difficult connected with the honour. Their answer is, taking the most favourable view of it, to be compared with the well-meant ignorant promise of Peter (John xiii. 37); if, indeed, the intensity of their regard for the places of honour did not prompt them to answer, *We can*, almost without thought, at all hazards. Further,

[1] To which view Lange still adheres; and further remarks on the not less but rather greater participation of *John* in the inward sympathetic experience of the suffering and dying of Christ. We understand, throughout, only the general participation of all Christians. As Koitsch sings, in his classical hymn, "O source of life;" and in the 6th verse,—For *all* who drink with Thee of the cup which Thou hast drunk in suffering here, shall there eternally rejoice with Thee.

Hosted by Google

there still lies in the background, as a tacit presupposition, the intermediate sentence—Then shall *ye all* also *sit*, *rest*, and *reign* with Me; ye shall all participate with Me in the glory which shall follow the suffering. Not merely, Ye twelve on your twelve thrones; but, as the apostolic doctrine runs (Rom. viii. 17; 2 Tim. ii. 11, 12; 1 Pet. i. 11, v. 1; 1 John iii. 2), and as Christ in the last revelation actually promises to every one who has opened the door to Him, and has overcome:—To him will I give to sit with Me on My throne! (Rev. iii. 21.) This latter is the strongest expression, denoting a degree of honour beyond which no other expression goes;—and yet from the relative character of all human symbolical phraseology, even in the holy Scriptures, this expression does not exclude the fact, that in the general participation in the glory of Christ there are special degrees and honours. *This* Christ acknowledges here, and speaks, as the sons of Zebedee have spoken, of *sitting on His right hand and on His left.* We doubt whether He thereby confirms the supposition that *two* of the disciples would actually be thus distinguished; and should prefer to understand that He merely adopts from their prayer the words which He uses in His answer: What ye imagine and represent by these places of honour, *i.e.*, special honour, and dignity above others in general. Of this He now testifies by a twofold antithesis! This belongs not to *Me*, but to the *Father;* this comes not from My *giving*, but from the Father's *preparing*. *Not Mine to give;*—of course, in the sense of the petition, not Mine now as Son of Man, inasmuch as I myself am yet in lowliness, and yet in the way of suffering; and not according to the way and manner of men in earthly kingdoms, into which there might enter partiality and caprice. The δοῦναι of the answer corresponds to the δὸς ἡμῖν of the question:—therefore if it does not belong to Me to give, it certainly does not belong to you to require or to ask it! The ἡτοίμασται, *for whom it is prepared*, points to the grounds of the special destination, endowment, calling, equipment, keeping of certain individuals for special grace above the general grace, laid in the beginning, nay, in the eternity, of the supreme decree of the Father; and it is intended, at the same time, to intimate that those who are thus ordained to special honours must also themselves be specially prepared for these honours. There is again no absolute antithesis in the saying as a whole; for it is

Hosted by Google

prepared of the Father for all in common, who inherit the kingdom (chap. xxv. 34); and moreover it is the Son, exalted by the Father, who will finally *confer* these special distinctions, as is plain from the ever-recurring δώσω, ποιήσω, "I will give," "I will make to sit down," etc., of the seven apocalyptical epistles, compared with the "I appoint" of Luke xxii. 29. Οὐκ ἔστιν ἐμὸν δοῦναι ἀλλ' οἷς ἡτοίμασται is not to be rendered with Erasmus, Non est meum dare sed iis *continget;* but if the ἡτοίμασται stands opposed to the ἐμόν falsely presupposed by the disciples, there yet belongs another and a true δοῦναι to the οἷς; and ἀλλά has the sense of εἰ μή, comp. Mark iv. 22, ix. 8; Matt. xvii. 8.

With such an absolute refusal of the premature request the ten might have been satisfied; but the same pride that prompted the two to prefer such a request dwells also in them, and feels itself so offended by that act of presumption as not to be able at once to forget it: These two disciples would be greater than we! It only expresses itself in another form, while they exalt themselves in jealous displeasure, which they probably betray also in words. The all-surveying wisdom of the faithful Master at once perceives this; and, in order that equal justice may be dealt, He fails not to rebuke in them also the self-exaltation which will admit of no precedence beside itself. The continuation of the answer many have understood as if it only meant to say:—Be not angry at the two, envy them not, even although it were prepared for them of the Father to sit on My right hand and on My left (which His answer at least left undetermined); for, if they are appointed to such honour, there is first ordained for them also a greater measure of humiliation,—the higher any one would rise, the deeper must he first sink. But such a side-glance at the two, by way of comparing them with the rest, is here very remote from the Lord's simple saying, which is rather meant merely to return and point back to a lesson of universal significance, that in the kingdom of Christ humility alone is true greatness, and that serving is and leads to true reigning.

Vers. 25–27. *To point back to this;*—for already, at chap. xviii. 3, 4 (comp. Luke ix. 48), had the Lord said what He here more strongly impresses upon the forgetful disciples, further developing words which He afterwards (Matt. xxiii. 11, 12; Luke

Hosted by Google

xxii. 25–27) again and again repeats.[1] Christ shows with great and strongly contrasting earnestness the difference and contrariety which exists between the heavenly and the earthly kingdom, the Kingdom of God and the kingdoms of this world. The latter, as being built on the natural condition and natural mind of men generally, presuppose in their dominions and dignities the ambitious and selfish use of power, as all experience shows. *Ye know:* this does not apply to the saying and doctrine as a whole, as if it meant, "I have already often said to you that your being great consists in being little." But it applies, as may be plainly seen, only to the first clause,—Ye know well how it goes in the kingdoms of the world, particularly now under the dominion of the Romans;—and, in addition to this, at all events in the background,—Ye know it from yourselves, inasmuch as your conscience testifies that, by nature, ye would be no exception. The ἄρχοντες τῶν ἐθνῶν are called in Mark more precisely οἱ δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν; and this remarkable expression —be it originally from the mouth of Christ, or an amplification of the Evangelist which truly corresponds to the meaning of Christ—calls for explanation. We admit the truth of Winer's remark when we, *in the first place*, grammatically interpret it of those who pass for the rulers of the nations, who are thus acknowledged, who have the concomitant respect and consideration: Comp. Gal. ii. 2, 6, 9; Luke xxii. 24; and in the History of Susanna (ver. 5), οἳ ἐδόκουν κυβερνᾶν τὸν λαόν. But in this first, and so to speak uncondemning sense, which acknowledges the thing as it is, there yet lies a slight antithesis to the real and actual truth, in so far as the respect of outward acknowledgment before men is a πρόσωπον not respected of God (Gal. v. 6); the appearing as ruler is in fact only a seeming. Hence the Vulgate is right with its *qui videntur principari*, even were we further to understand *qui sibi videntur*.[2] For there corresponds to the outward seeming and acknowledgment an inward

[1] St Luke, as he gives the saying which Christ uttered at the Supper, in nearly the same form as this, has here omitted the first statement of it.

[2] With v. Gerlach: Those who think to rule, who imagine that they have right of dominion;—we should not regard this however as precisely the first and sole meaning. Lange, on the other hand, sharply hits our interpretation in the expression: "the acknowledged powers of appearance, the princes in the world of appearance."

Hosted by Google

thinking and imagining themselves to be what they pass for; whoever has the power in his hands also fancies that he may arbitrarily use it; so that (*here* at least, where Christ speaks of the self-willed disposition and conduct of the rulers of the world) the δοκεῖν passes ironically into the same signification which it has, for example, at Luke viii. 18; 1 Cor. x. 12.[1] Christ will have in His kingdom no mere δοκοῦντες ἄρχειν in any sense whatever, but true rulers in full right; in the one sole might of ministering love, which is then in reality only *His own*, the sole legitimate power of the one Ruler.[2] He will have no mere external dominion *over* men outwardly, without subjection of their hearts; no mere seeming and being called "great," without the inward dignity of real worth and pre-eminence. Therefore, of the rulers of the world it is κατακυριεύειν and κατεξουσιάζειν that are used; κατά often denoting the bad side of the accompanying idea, for example in the word of Peter (1 Pet. v. 3), where there is perhaps an allusion to this saying of Christ. The second αὐτῶν seems indeed, like the first, to belong to ἐθνῶν—"over them" and "upon them," both referring to "the Gentiles"—and in the repetition at Luke xxii. 25, it is certainly not otherwise to be taken; still, we are disposed to pay some regard to Grotius, who *here* refers the second αὐτῶν to the ἄρχοντας just named—"upon them" to "the Princes." There then arises without violence a still deeper sense, which certainly quite corresponds to the meaning of Christ. As the *rulers* or ἄρχοντες in general exercise their power over the nations, so, by way of recompense, the same thing happens to them from those who are *great* and *greater* among themselves, who, in turn, subdue and enslave the weaker; thus there is in the world a gradual scale according to which dominion is exercised in an ever ascending degree, just as any one is able to make himself *great*, and aims at making himself greater than others. Not so with you! Christ does not (for this would only be in turn to exercise dominion on His part) do away with all this striving on the part of the rulers and great ones upon earth, which proceeds from the natural disposition of men; but He builds His kingdom, in which the power of

[1] Comp. again 1 Cor. xi. 16, where it is somewhat differently applied, viz., when any one fancies that he must now indeed quarrel.

[2] So, for example, Crusius: Christ Jesus will not suffer such a state of things; as *He rules indeed*, while mortal rulers only *seem* to rule.

Hosted by Google

ministering love is the great ruling principle, in, and under, these historical forms of national government. He does not disturb from without political dignities, with all their degrees of rank and power, although unfortunately they carry in them ambition and self-will; but He heals and renews from within outwardly, inasmuch as He puts His humble disciples here and there in the place of rulers, and at all events prepares for them, even in this world, a dominion of spiritual power,—until the σχῆμα, *the fashion* of this world shall pass away, when the order of the kingdom of God may be represented also outwardly. In *this* kingdom there are also degrees of rank and power, as we have already seen; for in this place our Lord does *not* say,—With you let there be no μέγας or πρῶτος, let no one aim at becoming such! But as regards the warrant to aim at this, and the way of attaining to it, the matter stands inversely as compared with the kingdoms of this world: He who will *become* truly great (not merely be accounted, or imagine himself, great), let him earn this distinction as a *servant;* whoso will *be* truly the first, let him seek dignity and honour in deeper humiliation; so that he may, with willing love, yield himself as a *servant* or slave to the last and the least—without detriment to his freedom, which is rather thus made manifest (1 Cor. ix. 19). And this ὃς ἐὰν θέλῃ, *he that will,* Christ proposes to them *all,* in order to heal and give a right direction to their strivings after greatness. To strive in *this way* after the highest honours and crowns of ministering love, with a holy sanctified ambition, the Lord here most earnestly summons all His disciples, setting before them the prize: "Go and serve; he who does this best shall be, and be called, the chief!"[1]

How, then, does the matter stand as regards priority of rank in the kingdom of God? In the first place,—apart from those outward honours and offices which must exist in state and church for the sake of the order of this present state of things,—all are now equal as brethren (Matt. xxiii. 8); equal in the

[1] But how and wherein *serve?* As if this were not self-evident! "Does any one ask,—How must the living man *express* his life, the strong his strength, the compassionate his compassion? If thou art but truly humble and willing to serve—thou shalt never be perplexed about the expression of thy humility and readiness to serve, any more than thine eye about the objects of seeing, or thine heart about room for beating." Häfeli.

Hosted by Google

humility which teaches every one to esteem every other better than himself (Phil. ii. 3). Thus, but only thus, does every one who is less participate notwithstanding in the general greatness and dignity which the full grace of the New Testament confers (Matt. xi. 11); he who will be this greater one, let him willingly be in his own eyes the lesser one! And then there is held out to all of us in the future the *one* common hope of our calling (Eph. iv. 4), and the Scripture speaks constantly of equal blessedness and glory. Peter is partaker with Christ even as all are whom He calls His disciples (John xiii. 8; xvii. 10, 20, 24); all the children are also heirs (Rom. viii. 17); and all saints judge the world (1 Cor. vi. 2; Ps. cxlix. 9); there is only one general kingly and priestly nobility belonging to all citizens of the kingdom (1 Pet. ii. 9; Rev. i. 5, 6). Such passages point to a future of final consummation, when God will be all *in all* (1 Cor. xv. 28); and, in view of this, even now a Paul, or Cephas, is not to be accounted of, for *all is yours!* (1 Cor. iii. 21). On the other hand, differences, degrees, thrones, are elsewhere spoken of. The twelve shall sit upon their twelve thrones, and judge or govern—of course so long as there is anything to judge or govern; and in this lies the solution of the question, how that equality is to be reconciled with these distinctions. In a preliminary period of the kingdom of glory upon earth—ἐν τῇ παλιγγενεσίᾳ—will there be the thrones, and the cities (Luke xix. 17, 19), and for a time yet first and last. To be first rather than last,—to *attain* to the *first* resurrection (Phil. iii. 11), etc. —after this we ought all to strive with the holy zeal of serving; and we shall receive what is due, that for which the Father according to the measure of His gifts would prepare and has prepared us. No preference of any kind whatever comes from the arbitrary gift and favour of the King in this kingdom; but the Father's decree and our faithfulness in our own special calling prepares, for each one, his future place. There will, indeed, remain in eternity also the members of the one body appointed by God (1 Cor. xii. 18), heads and eyes, as also hands and feet; a *difference* in the end to be reached corresponds to the different ways that lead to that end, and *in so far* there will be a pre-eminence of some above others. Still in the final fulfilment there will be no actual precedency; all will be the entire body, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all (Eph. i. 23).

Hosted by Google

What remains for us to strive and pray for? Seek not to become an eye if thou art called and prepared to be a hand, but do not remain a foot if something higher is ordained for thee. Be faithful in thy grace and gift, so shalt thou become what thou canst and art to become; at the last thou shalt certainly be blessed in thy portion, and glorious in common with all. As some one has said: "To be willing to know nothing but Christ crucified makes us capable of attaining to all knowledge"—so say we also: To be willing to become nothing but the least servant of all, makes us capable and worthy to become great and exalted. And this is what our Lord has here said, and what He forthwith seals with His own example as the Head and King.

Ver. 28. The "come" points always to the first advent and appearing of the Son of Man in the flesh. The "not to be ministered unto" does not, of course, refer to an outward renouncing of every act of service offered to Him in love, nay even demanded by His undeniable dignity (chap. xxvii. 55; Luke x. 40; John xiii. 13); so that neither is it forbidden to us to have men-servants and maid-servants, as helpers to serve in the earthly work. But it is all the more deeply to be understood in its innermost truth, according to which the Son of God, who is come as the Son of Man, sought not His own honour, used not His power as King in the manner of men (ver. 25), so as to cast all things in adoration at His feet, which alone had been the true service due to Him, but,—as it is written in Is. xliii. 24, 25, of God the Lord. He has served us sinners in order to wash us from our sin, has become the servant and burden-bearer of us all; and this He sometimes represented outwardly in Himself for a testimony (see Luke xxii. 27). He has *given His life for us*, or laid it down in self-sacrificing love (John x. 12, 18; xv. 13); and in so far this is also set before us as a pattern which we are to follow (1 John iii. 16). But while He at first speaks thus humbly, He must at the same time, for the truth's sake, add a word concerning the great and sole virtue and significance of *His* sacrificial death;—which goes far beyond a mere example, by which rather the power and *liberty* to follow Him have been procured for us all.[1] This high and

[1] Also the *liberty* of the Church, thus ransomed by Him, to refuse to be enslaved by any hierarchy, always allied to despotism; the liberty acknow-

Hosted by Google

comprehensive testimony is yet extorted from Him here in the deepest humility, so that He may not deny Himself. Λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν—this is as well the germ of all the apostolic doctrine concerning the vicarious sacrificial death, as also a mere declaration with retrospective reference to the prophecies and types of the Old Testament: "I am He who is come, who also should and must come to that end!" It would be necessary here to enter into the dogmatics of the subject, and into the Old Testament as a whole, in order to bring out the full meaning of this simply expressive term λύτρον (which is afterwards carried out in the New Testament in many compounds); but what belongs to the commentator is only to point out the sense and idea of the saying in order to deeper inquiry. We find in Ex. xxi. 30 כֹּפֶר and פִּדְיוֹן נַפְשׁ (LXX. λύτρα) used for the *ransom* and equivalent of *forfeited life*[1] in the proper sense; and in Lev. xxv. 24, 51 the *purchase-price* to be paid for a possession in land, according to just valuation, גְּאֻלָּה, is rendered by τὰ λύτρα in the LXX. When in this passage, with evident allusion for the rest to Is. liii. 10, 12, the Holy Spirit in recording the saying of Christ uses the word λύτρον, for אָשָׁם (and לְכַפֵּר, כֹּפֶר Lev. xvii. 11), where Christ Himself of course did not use it, the expression points at all events to a substitutionary, therefore redeeming, and thus releasing, saving, sacrificial death of Christ;—although much may still remain to be said from the entire Scripture, and much to be inferred from the internal nature of the thing, respecting the true sense in which this substitution is to be understood. The expression here, however definite on one side, yet determines nothing more special; and admits of every doctrine which is reconcilable with the rest of Scripture, and with the simple letter of the λύτρον ἀντὶ (as also the ἀντίλυτρον, 1 Tim. ii. 6, which occurs only there). Even should we attach the strict sense to this solitary ἀντὶ (for which in every other place we find ὑπὲρ,

ledge only that authority which, as the diaconate of love, ever goes on renewing itself through the Spirit of Christ. See in Lange ii. 1154, this profound connection of the words with all that precedes (formerly overlooked by me); at the same time the most striking confirmation of the principle of office in the Reformed Church, in its proper truth as confuting many Lutherans.

[1] Not merely "the ransoming from the condition of slaves," as Lange here mistakes it.

Hosted by Google

περὶ, διὰ), as is right, it would still be going beyond what is proper to raise from it the difficult question, which can only give rise to endless disputation, namely, *to whom* properly the ransom and the purchase price of the one life for all lives is paid. The meaning of the expression—which remains always at the same time figurative—does not, as appears to us, reach so far; and the δοῦναι τὴν ψυχήν, which is always put as it is here, *without* a dative, is by no means in this sense to be pressed. It signifies to *yield up*, to give up to death, to offer, to stake for something else in general, as the Heb. נתן, and particularly Is. liii. 10, 12, תָּשִׂים נַפְשׁוֹ——הֶעֱרָה לַמָּוֶת. Christ has thereby rendered satisfaction in every sense, and on all sides; He has given what corresponds to, and is necessary for, our redemption; chiefly, and in the last and most proper intention, however, He has given His life only in order to take it again as a life *for us*, consequently thereby to pay *to us*, so as to cover our deficit and bankruptcy. Finally, as regards the πολλῶν here and Matt. xxvi. 28 (comp. besides Heb. ix. 28), it is clear, from numerous parallel passages of Scripture (at the head of which is 1 Tim. ii. 6, ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων), that the universal application of the death of Christ (which, as Richter remarks, already lies in the ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, the universal man, the one for all) is certainly not to be denied on the ground of this expression; and consequently that the πολλοί here might well enough denote the πάντας, who stand in opposition to the one, as at Rom. v. 15, 18, 19. If, however, the want of the article here is specially noticed, then it only remains to understand it of the many among the all, in whom, as actually redeemed, the power of redemption becomes a reality. This will at least appear as the most probable sense at chap. xxvi. 28, on the occasion of the last supper (as also Heb. ix. 28); and it seems most exactly to correspond to the רַבִּים, Is. liii. 11, 12 (comp. lii. 14, 15) *together with* the כֻּלָּנוּ, ver. 6.

Hosted by Google

THE TWO BLIND MEN AT JERICHO.

(Matt. xx. 32; Mark x. 51, 52; Luke xviii. 41, 42.)

Although the question whether Christ here spake to two blind men or only to one, whether on departing from, or entering into Jericho, is beside our object, which is to hear Him *speak*, it would yet be affectation not to express our opinion, at least in a brief note, respecting this difficulty;—a difficulty so welcome to the disputations, and even to the peaceable and simple student of the Harmony certainly remarkable.[1] In other respects, there

[1] We have already frequently found that St Matthew does not record with strict precision the outward events, but that he is always intent upon grasping the kernel of the sayings, and upon seizing what is essential and significant in the history; it is therefore natural to expect that, here also, he should deviate from the common reality. For St Mark mentions the *one* blind man, who was healed as Christ *was departing from Jericho*, so decidedly by name, and describes the entire scene so particularly even to the throwing away of the garments, as to make us unwilling to admit that there was another blind man cured along with this Bartimeus. St Luke again seems to narrate, quite as distinctly, a similar (although not quite the same) incident as having taken place when they were *entering into Jericho* (chap. xix. 1); so that one is tempted to suppose that St Matthew, in this case, *blends together* the narratives of the two Evangelists who were not Apostles, on account of the similarity of the occurrences. (Rather this, at least, than the old solution which has been reproduced with more acuteness than proof in Richter's Hausbibel; viz. that there was an intervening space between old and new Jericho, and that according to their position the inhabitants of Palestine might speak of departing from, and the Greek of entering into Jericho.) *But*, against this, is to be considered, what St Matthew and St Mark represent as very probable, that the great multitude had collected first of all in the town, with which Luke xix. also agrees; again that the people should twice, and chiefly the second time, *rebuke* the blind man, when one had been healed immediately before, is almost inconceivable, and not at all so simple as Ebrard thinks; finally, as regards only one blind man being noticed, namely, Bartimeus, who was the better known of the two, we have a perfect parallel to this in the account of the Gadarene miracle. St Luke does not intend to be so strictly observant of chronological order; in order that he may significantly connect vers. 34 and 35 (as preachers from the earliest times have taken it,

Hosted by Google

is little to be said on the words of Christ which occur in this narrative. The *first*, in which He *called* to Him the blind men, who so importunately cried to Him (Matt. ver. 32), or bade them be called (Mark ver. 49; Luke ver. 40), is not expressed, but (kindly checking the people) may have run thus: "Hinder them not, let them come!" The *second* is given by the three Evangelists in harmony with each other, differing only as to the singular or plural: *What will ye that I shall do unto you?* It seems indeed a strange question. But it is partly a challenge to them to testify their faith (as at Matt. ix. 28); partly a protest against the self-constituted masters of ceremonies with their courtly ideas, who will not suffer the procession of the King to be interrupted by the prayer of the beggars,[1]—an expression of His readiness to *serve* (beautifully corresponding with what precedes, Matt. ver. 28, comp. ver. 21), in which He, in a truly royal manner, condescends to the will of beggars, so that all misery may disappear before Him; partly, in fine, a significant intimation for us (according to the unconsciously symbolical character of all the particular sayings and doings of Christ), that He will do to us only according to what our faith and our prayer desire of Him. The *third* word (only in St Mark and St Luke) which accompanies the cure, *Go!* as one who is whole, who can see, *with thy sight! thy faith hath helped thee*—is the well-known, familiar expression of the gracious, humble love and

and have discoursed of our blindness with respect to the understanding of the passion of our Lord), he puts this incident first, and then lets that concerning Zaccheus follow. We are not, therefore, warranted in having recourse to the artificial expedient of Grotius, that ἐγγίζειν εἰς, Luke xviii. 35, as also xix. 2, indicates only the being near in general, but must leave its proper force to καὶ εἰσελθών, chap. xix. 1. Luke starts from the truth, that the one blind man actually sat already on the way, at the entrance into Jericho; but then he himself explains, by διαπορευομένου, ver. 35 (to which chap. xix. 1 διήρχετο in the Pluperf. recurs), that, in his account, he anticipates and combines what was further done afterwards on leaving Jericho (after a second blind man had come to be there). Thus we agree in the main with that which Bengel's correct tact already discovered, and Meyer's note on St Luke's account holds to be probable. Lange's supposition, of an entrance and departure by the same gate, we think forced and unnatural, as the road to Jerusalem by Jericho could hardly lead to and from that town as a *cul-de-sac*.

[1] Compare on this Lange iii. 194, 347.

Hosted by Google

wisdom of the Saviour, pointing, in what is outward, to the inward thing which is of principal importance. Ἀναβλέπειν means here simply to *look up*—by no means to see *again*, to *become* seeing. The blind man prayed: Lord, that I *may see!* Christ gives immediately hearing and answer: *See!* for *thou canst!*

CHRIST SENDS FOR THE ASSES.

(Matt. xxi. 2, 3; Mark xi. 2, 3; Luke xix. 30, 31.)

We do not know whether the two disciples whom Christ here sends were Peter and John, as on a former occasion, Mark xiv. 13, comp. Luke xxii. 8; but there must needs be two, not merely in order to bring the two asses, but in order formally to represent the entire body of His disciples, and to remove from their mission the appearance of individual caprice. The village lying in sight of them was certainly Bethphage itself, which St Matthew therefore alone has named. It can hardly at least have been Bethany, as, from the exact knowledge which Christ had of this village, the indefinite nature of the message, nay, even the indefinite designation of the place, would have had somewhat of affectation in it.[1] In no case are we to understand a previous agreement with the owner of the asses; for in that case the indefinite words given by the three Evangelists, "If *any man* hath aught to say against it," would contain a slight semblance of dissimulation. All that He says rather produces the impression of a miraculous foreseeing and foretelling of the particular circumstances: the εὑρήσετε (to which therefore St John, in a statement that concisely presupposes this transaction, chap. xii. 14, gives prominence in a εὑρών which excludes all previous concert) is nearly the same as εὑρήσεις, Matt. xvii. 27. The εὐθέως, occurring twice (the first, according to Mark, equivalent to εἰσπορευόμενοι εἰς τὴν κώμην), together with the circumstance that the ass would be found *tied*, *i. e.*, as it were already pre-

[1] According to St Mark and St Luke, in travelling to Jerusalem Bethphage came before Bethany, perhaps was immediately contiguous to it.

Hosted by Google

pared, and waiting in the public way, confirms this interpretation of the words, which is still further confirmed afterwards on occasion of the second sending for the preparation of the paschal lamb. Here it is said, "A man will meet you bearing a pitcher of water, he will show you the way to the right house," like what Samuel the *seer* says to Saul, 1 Sam. x. 2–7; a manner of prophecy in its most ancient form, pointing immediately and specially to the nearest future (before that typical kind which points to more remote periods begins with 2 Sam. vii.), which must represent itself also in Christ. If the disciples should at first be almost suspected of the intention to steal the animals, a single word is to satisfy the owner (and whoever else might belong to him, Mark, ver. 5; Luke, ver. 33), viz., *The Lord* hath need of them! *Here* at all events more is meant than merely *our Master* (ὁ διδάσκαλος, chap. xxvi. 18); in the sense in which Christ here uses this name, it borders on the designation *the King Messiah*.[1] It is therefore implied in this, that these people belonged to the number of those who believed on Him, that they at once understood who "the Lord" was, and without hesitation willingly served Him.[2] Christ could not call Himself the "Son of Man" here where in his humiliation He will yet represent His *kingly dignity;* but, precisely on this account, the *need of the Lord*, who has not even an ass of His own for His festal procession, presents a significant contrast which the preachers on the Advent from the earliest times have not failed to notice.

Whether Jesus during the whole period of His public life ever *rode* before, is nowhere written; and, from His walking being mentioned so often and without an exception, it is very

[1] For it is impossible (with *Alford*) to understand here Jehovah, the God of Israel, for whose service the animals were needed. If it were so, this would be the third example of such an expression in the mouth of Christ; see Mark v. 19, and xiii. 20 (comp. my remark Vol. 1, 303); here, however, it would surely be against all decorum to say, *God the Lord* hath need of two asses!

[2] Indeed the communist *Weitling*, in his book on Freedom, finds here maintained the right of those who are in want to the possessions of their rich neighbours; and laments that, now-a-days, when we have become so much more refined, the Lord and His messengers who should act in this manner would be seized by the neck and accused of theft.

Hosted by Google

improbable. Wherefore then now? He who can believe that our Lord was too tired at this particular time to ascend the Mount of Olives, may do so; His words, and the narrative in its harmony with the prediction, show something else. If Christ wanted as usual to enter the town unobserved, He would not have acted thus; but He will consciously and on purpose enter in a thoroughly public manner, raised above the accompanying crowd (so that it might not happen as at Luke xix. 3); He will go to meet the multitudes that are eagerly waiting for Him, and who afterwards fetch Him; and thus make the accepted honour on His part more expressive of humility, and more significant than it would have been without this provision. *More significant;* for what St Matthew adds, ver. 4, 5, includes in the τοῦτο δὲ ὅλον (which points beforehand to the result) the *remarkable sending* just narrated; and is meant therefore precisely to disclose the *thoughts and design of Christ in all this*, as if it were said: Thus did Christ speak and act, that the word of the prophet might be fulfilled. He knew that His hour was nearly come; once more, before His crucifixion, He will enter Jerusalem with a first and last outward demonstration of honour, such as is proper to Him as her King, with a last public offer of Himself for a testimony. (*Tell ye* the daughter of Zion!) We do not agree with Lange, who regards this *Hosanna*,—which from the earliest times in Advent sermons has been taken as a figure of empty honour without understanding and earnestness—in the better sense, as an expression of "obscure beginnings of the higher Christological knowledge," of the "better hopes of the people;" and supposes that Christ could not any longer refuse the "enthusiasm, the homage of His people." No! it appears very evident from Luke xix. 41 ss., that Christ regarded the whole matter in quite a different light; His entry was rather a sacrificial procession, in which He yielded Himself up to *this* people, who cried now Hosanna, and then Crucify! Only so as that, at least in the symbolical sense, such a homage was for once admitted by Him, at the last *offer* of Himself as King. Therefore, although even His disciples misunderstand it, He regards the whole event in its true light. Any insurrection on the part of those whose enmity has ripened, is now no longer to be regarded; the license attending the festival, which brought with

Hosted by Google

it many a processional entry into Jerusalem, permits what is unusual, so that even Pilate finds nothing offensive in this mere spectacle.[1] Only the enemies (who indeed could not possibly put these thousands under ban) murmur at it. The whole scene, as already said, becomes for Him a *sacrificial procession*, in which He yields Himself. To the people of Israel it is the last official declaration —Who He is; while for the entire *future* Church of *His* true people (the daughter of Zion in the prophetical sense) it is a permanent advent word and advent figure, ever reproduced in preaching, in which there is a wondrous union of majesty and lowliness: *Behold, thy King cometh, meek!*—a preparatory type of the as yet future acknowledgment and glory of Christ (Matt. xxiii. 39).[2] All this is no strange product of a myth-framing church, of the self-consciousness dreaming the ancient idea into history; *it took place*, γέγονεν, as recorded there in its consistent totality,—the empty Hosanna before the Crucify! the tears over Jerusalem, the cleansing of the temple, the blind and lame, the children crying in the temple, the curse on the fig-tree. What an entire picture, intelligible only when viewed as actual history in the life of the Son of God! And how does the pencil of the Evangelist portray by a few strokes,—how simply and artlessly, without a trace of imagination,—what, if not history, would be the sublimest fiction!

It is evident that the fulfilled prophecy of Zechariah described generally the *Messiah*, as the humble Prince of Peace, procuring *deliverance* for Himself and us only through *sufferings*. But it is also evident that, as often, so here, the fulfilling Providence, for the sake of abundant clearness, literally embodies the general idea; and in like manner that this literal realisation in fact of the general prediction was already foreseen and provided for

[1] Consequently nothing really punishable. Bahrdt very perversely found in this entry the design on the part of Jesus to *stir up* His enemies, and furnish them even with the *right* to accuse Him—because He had now resolved to die (a false death!).

[2] Of this, the only true view of the matter, Hase gives a *caricature* when he says that, among Christ's reasons for this demonstration, there was perhaps the pleasure of showing to His enemies their weakness, and letting that which *at one time* He had positively *meant* according to Old Testament prophecy, pass by in Him as a *dream* of its fulfilment!! It is rather a new typical prophecy, that He yet remains the King.

Hosted by Google

by the Spirit in the word of the Prophet. The sum of the prophecies of Zechariah is the re-establishment of the kingdom of Israel in its entire preparation, accomplishment, and connection; and with this such historically special notices are interspersed as were never before given, in order that the whole prophecy, as it draws near to its fulfilment, may become concentrated. In the first section (chs. i.–viii.) we have the whole history of the return from Babylon, with its principal agents and actors, as the type of the future return of Israel from its dispersion; and the view becomes ever clearer until it ends in a complete picture of the new Jerusalem (chap. viii.). The second section (chs. ix.–xiv.) now entirely separates this great result from its type, and speaks plainly of the new Jerusalem seen in the remote future; instead of direct reference to the typical restoration the Spirit gives general surveys, and retrospective glances towards the time of preparation. If at last (chs. xii.–xiv.) the retrospective views from the goal attained predominate, there lies on the other hand in chs. ix.–xi. the intimation of the entire history of Israel, until chap. xii. 10 is fulfilled.[1] Chap. ix. gives beforehand the most general view. The Lord governs all men and nations according to the plan of His counsel with respect to Israel (ver. 1). Purifying judgments upon the nations of the world run parallel, and in harmony, with the special protection which He affords to *His* house and people chosen before, and out of, the nations (ver. 8). In a *first* coming, marked by lowliness and peacefulness (which is plainly and significantly looked back to here), *the King* appears;—He *first* (because Israel rejects Him!) builds up His promised kingdom among all *the heathen* (ver. 10);—He then returns again also to Israel (ver. 11–17). That ver. 9 speaks of the Messiah is so evident from ver. 10, that even Maurer could only render it: veniet rex optimus maximus, Messias, pacem daturus orbi terrarum, dominaturus longe lateque. But that this *King* appears here in *lowliness* is the principal idea (to which the learned commentators have scarcely given its due weight) of this prophetical passage. As such it stands alone in its kind; and its expressions must, for this reason, embody

[1] We are prepared with an interpretation of chap. xi. which will rescue it from Hofmann's confusion; and shall give it on Matt. xxvi. 31.

Hosted by Google

themselves in some visible symbol before the eyes of Israel[1] The נוֹשָׁע,[2] which by the LXX. and Chald. was not understood, and therefore ungrammatically changed into the Active, is not equivalent to *victorious*,—at least with reference to earthly weapons of victory, for the ass is intended exactly to contradict this,—but it is to be closely connected with the decisive עָנִי. Let it be allowed, which *we* do not with many deny, that עָנִי and עָנָו to a certain extent run into each other, and that the πραΰς of the LXX., retained by St Matthew, is at least half warranted, there still remains for the Old Testament usage (especially that of the Psalms) the basis of "humility and meekness" (if עָנִי is made to include the latter), a condition of *distress* and *suffering*, a being humbled and brought low.[3] The righteous *King* is therefore first a meek sufferer, to whom *deliverance comes* first of all from His own sufferings, that He may thereby procure salvation and deliverance, in order to righteousness and peace, for all His people;—thus, and no otherwise, does He *come* the first time! In order to furnish a complete and graphic picture of this, the Prophet portrays Him riding—not upon the war-horse (Rev. xix. 11), but upon an ass's colt, as in olden time the judges (Judges x. 4; xii. 14; v. 10); and again because this ass, to which, by a redundancy of words, such strong prominence is given, forms, so to speak, the point of the prophecy, *therefore* does Christ determine, according to the plan of the Spirit, to realise this prophetic figure. Thus must we understand Zechariah, in order to interpret the words of Jesus here (vers. 2, 3). St John (chap. xii. 14–16) even mentions only the riding upon the ass, as the most concentrated fulfilment. St Matthew, in the saying of Christ, as afterwards in the narrative (ver. 7), specifies exactly the two animals which the prophetic word mentions. St Mark and

[1] Of which the Jewish interpretation could make no use; so that it explains thus: When Israel believingly receives the Messiah, then He comes in the clouds of heaven; but when they are not worthy of this, on an ass. See the citations in Sepp, iii. 183.

[2] Luther incorrectly, *ein* Helfer, *bringing help;* instead of which the corrected Bible has *dem geholfen ist, one who is holpen.* The citation of Matthew goes beyond the δίκαιος καὶ σώζων.

[3] Passive of ענה; the form is קָטוּל = קָטִיל.

Hosted by Google

St Luke have only the colt. That the Prophet adds the וְעַל עַיִר epexegetically is indeed true; as also that בֶּן־אֲתֹנוֹת[1] is intended to strengthen the עַיִר, which in other places is often equivalent to חֲמוֹר in general,—in the most proper sense a *foal*, which is still dependent on its mother, πῶλος νέος. Wherefore this, and what is the prophetical idea implied in it; what is then the significance of this particular which was foreseen only as a symbol? We find the plain answer in St Mark and St Luke, where Christ says further: A foal *on which never yet man sat.* This, as Maurer again observes, is actually indicated in the prophecy; and even in the citation in St Matthew (which half *changes*, half accepts the text of the LXX.) it is remarkably caught up in the slight antithesis υἱὸν ὑποζυγίου. Only an animal hitherto unridden is proper to the sacred dignity of the rider; comp. Numb. xix. 2–5, Deut. xxi. 3, 1 Sam. vi. 7, 2 Sam. vi. 3, and many passages from profane authors, rightly adduced here by the learned. Observe now how the *Holy Spirit*,—without regarding the objections of those sneering persons who will not allow that such things are proper to Him,—yet above and behind the consciousness of the Prophet, points, in the expressions which He suggests, to a literally proper fulfilment; inasmuch as He brings in this subordinate idea, which was not otherwise of importance to the principal subject. Observe also why Christ, penetrating into the meaning of this Scripture better than the critics, gives directions for *both animals*, which the Father has made ready for Him, *to be brought:* why the disciples, without thinking of Zechariah (John xii. 16), were unwittingly led to spread the garments over both (Matt. ἐπάνω αὐτῶν), and thus to take with them also the she-ass as belonging to the other, and to be used along with it.[2] *All this was done*, not merely in order

[1] The Plur. for the Sing. by way of generalising. Only such interpreters as Jahn and Michaelis could suppose blood asses with pedigrees to be meant!

[2] We prefer to let alone the typological significance which commentators, from the earliest times, have found in the two asses (v. Meyer: The she-ass is the Old Testament, the law; the foal is the new Church, the Gospel). That the she-ass was led along with the other not merely *causa pompae*, but was intended to embody the prophetic figure, is remarked also by Hengstenberg (Christol. ii. 135); as also that in the Prophet there is a *gradation* in the expression. But we do not agree

Hosted by Google

that the not yet broken foal, when its mother was beside it, might behave more quietly, but that the whole prophetic passage might appear before the eyes of the daughter of Zion in a realised picture. He who will call this trifling, let him indulge his sneer against Christ. We rather perceive and reverently honour the holy earnestness of the King, who humbly *offers* Himself, in this most literal fulfilment of a prophecy which testifies of Him,—in that He paints and *sets evidently forth before their eyes* (Gal. iii. 1; Luke xix. 42), how *He cometh to them.*

THE DEN OF ROBBERS; AND THE CHILDREN'S PRAISE.

(Matt. xxi. 13–16; Mark xi. 17; Luke xix. 46.)

Another יִבֹא stood at the close of prophecy in Malachi: The Lord shall come to his temple to purify and to cleanse the sons of Levi. Once already, at the beginning of His course, had Christ held this up before them in act and symbol; they, however, had persisted more determinedly in not abiding the day of His coming, they had not put away the offence, perhaps even had precisely at this time restored it by way of defiance. Here He declares and proves by His act, that He is at the end no other than He was at the beginning. He works

in this, that the gradation (an animal upon which no man had ever yet rode!) is intended to indicate *merely* greater lowliness, poverty. For the rest it is well known what needless trouble many commentators have given themselves to account for there being two animals, and what subject for mockery this has afforded to Strauss. Schleiermacher also gives the reins to his fancy: "The she-ass no longer runs beside a πῶλος that is fit for riding,—although it has not yet been used for that purpose,—but has long since left it to itself." Neander is so bold as to make John xii. 14 (only one ὀνάριον) valid against the truth of Matthew's account; who, he says, has invented the two animals from a misapprehension of the passage in Zechariah (also the αὐτῶν and αὐτούς ver 3 in the mouth of Christ!). These theologians have not understood the ἵνα πληρωθῇ.

Hosted by Google

still while it is day; He is not weary of testifying by word and deed in the still standing sanctuary;—"once more He goes the way which He had loved as a child, up to the temple."[1] Nay, *once more*, His zeal breaks forth against the desecration of the temple; the place of worship still, though soon to be destroyed.[2] St Matthew represents the order of the events as if this cleansing of the temple followed on the day of the entrance into Jerusalem. According to St Mark our Lord began to *look round about* upon all things with rebuking glance at the eventide; but "on this day of grace and joy delayed the complete execution of His righteous anger till the morrow." This notice of Bengel as to the harmony is quite sufficient. More severe than on that former occasion (as we remarked there), He now speaks out plainly, and without softening the prophetical word, of the *den of robbers;* and with heightened emotion He combines with it another prophetical passage in most rebuking contrast. This word respecting the *house of prayer*, pointing back, properly speaking, to the consecration, 1 Kings viii. 29, is written in Is. lvi. 7; Christ cites it as it is written, so that it is wrong to refer "*My* house" here to Himself. *Be called* in truth—*i.e.*, really *be;* hence, in St Luke, ἐστίν is put for this. St Mark, in order to complete the saying, forgets not to add, *among all nations;* and this also was very appropriate, as it was in the fore-court of the Gentiles that the money-changers and traders were.[3] In Jer. vii. 11, מְעָרַת פָּרִצִים corresponds also by ironical antithesis to the *house* of the Lord, for the *den* of robbers is *their* dwelling. If we adhere to the most direct meaning of λῃσταί, then the profane trafficking in the temple would be compared to the division of the spoil of robbers in their den. But the corresponding

[1] In August Thieme's Ilmenaur Sermons, p. 35.

[2] That Sepp, who is so often confused and arbitrary in his procedure (and who has no right to sum up "a catalogue of the sins of Protestant theologians"), should suppose only *one* purifying of the temple, because "the second is in itself out of place, and takes away the significance of the first"—does not astonish us. But that Lange, following modern criticism, should in like manner hold that the occurrence, which might "easily be by degrees shifted from its place in the tradition," took place only once according to John—did surprise us; but he has since retracted it.

[3] Lange even thinks here, that now in the *second* purifying Christ openly maintains the right of the *Gentiles* to the temple.

Hosted by Google

פָּרִצִים in the original text means in itself more than this,—viz., violent ones (as ravenous beasts, Is. xxxv. 9), and passes over to the accompanying idea of *murderers* (as also the expression Räuber in the German), s. Ez. xviii. 10; Hos. iv. 2; Ps. xvii. 4. Moreover, in the context in Jeremiah the shedding of innocent blood *in this place* is expressly spoken of ver. 6, and רָצַח at ver. 9 (comp. again Hos. iv. 2). Consequently Luther's "*den of murderers*" is quite right; and our Lord, by applying this word on this occasion, not merely chastises the murderous disposition and conduct of the dwellers in the temple in general, but now hints in the deepest sense, and more plainly than the first time (Destroy this temple!), at the now almost matured counsel of murder against His own most sacred person, which He well knew of. And this therefore St Mark ver. 18 and St Luke ver. 47 make immediately to follow.

The angry and rebuking zeal for His Father's house is at the same time accompanied by so much kindness, that the blind and lame, the wretched who need help, now as usual come to Him, and He heals them.[1] It is the one unvarying love, the one unvarying testimony: "I am He who should come!" The miserable, and the little children, are not afraid of His anger; but the malignant enemies are again angry even at His kindness. The miracles of healing,—and the thanksgivings which probably followed them,—the praises of those that were healed and others with them, waken in the *children* the echo of yesterday's homage, whose Hosanna, with the palm branches and all the accompanying pomp, so pleased them that doubtless they heartily joined in the cry yesterday, and are quite ready to begin it anew to-day.[2] Christ, with a sad kindness, lets it be done again; but the innocent cry of the children excites a blind fury in the high priests

[1] Neander, indeed, does not altogether believe this account on St Matthew's word alone, as it narrates "in an indefinite manner" and evidently "unhistorically;" what is true in it to him is only that the like did once take place in Jerusalem. Ah, if the sainted Neander could only now speak, and, for our sakes, retract these his follies!

[2] This alone and nothing further is contained in the simple account. Sepp in his usual manner (in which one must always prudently distinguish respectable learning from confused mythology) brings forward Jewish fables of holy temple-boys who, moved by the Holy Ghost, had received Jesus.

Hosted by Google

and scribes, because their conscience hears in it the truth which they would stifle. As several of the Pharisees yesterday expected that Christ would rebuke His disciples, and received for answer a proverb from the Scripture indirectly applied (Luke xix. 39, 40)—so the rulers of the temple venture to-day to put the bold question, *Hearest thou not what these say?* As if it were evident of itself that He must check this impropriety! Christ, however, is not weary of answering. With another question, *Have ye never read?* He puts to shame the adversaries, and recompenses their malice with a piece of instruction, profoundly pointing to Scripture, to their hearts, and the counsel of God respecting His kingdom,—a lesson by which they might yet have become wise. He has the Scripture, especially since Luke xviii. 13, continually in His mind; at every step He directs His course by the light of its prophecy.

As He afterwards, Matt. xxi. 42, refers to an undoubtedly Messianic psalm, so now, with the same formula of interrogation, He refers not merely to a general truth respecting the praise of God proceeding from the mouth of children, but to a psalm which, in the most proper sense, prophesies of Him and His kingdom. In order not to repeat myself, I beg the reader to look into my interpretation of the eighth psalm,[1] where it is shown from the entire connection of the psalm that the ordained *praise*, according to the LXX., or rather the settled *power*, according to the original text, refers to the kingdom of restoring grace in the humbled and exalted Son of Man, to the destroying and putting to shame of the enemies, nay, of the enemy of God, in the most proper sense; and that the *babes* and *sucklings*, while not to be dissociated from the natural figure, are already in the psalm to be certainly understood spiritually of the same μικροί and νηπιοί who are meant in Matthew xi. 25. "The outward fulfilment of the prophecy is, as oftentimes" (for example in the riding upon the ass just before), "only itself again a figurative representation of its inner sense." Neither Umbreit nor Hengstenberg nor de Wette can make me waver in this view of the whole psalm, and of this citation from it in particular; which is too firmly settled in the childlike understanding of the

[1] Seventy selected Psalms, Second Part.

Hosted by Google

entire Church of the faithful from the earliest times, and too closely agrees with the prevailing application of it in preaching, not to be found true when a true exegesis is applied to it. De Wette, who is the master of shallow criticism, first, in complete contradiction to the light in which Scripture was understood by Christ and His Apostles,[1] invents a "hebraism" which exists nowhere but in the fancies of false theology, and then goes on to say that the Messianic sense of the eighth psalm vanishes and is lost. It is not however an isolated v. Meyer, or R. Stier, who understands this psalm in the sense we have assigned to it; but the simplicity of the faithful, which no learning can overthrow, has with one voice always so taken it. So St Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 27; Heb. ii. 6; Eph. i. 22; and before him the Lord Christ in His supreme authority. What otherwise would be the intermediate link between the citation and the words with which it is introduced—*Have ye never known!*—which He ordinarily uses only when they are very definitely appropriate? And is it not theological in the genuine sense to receive such an interpretation as agrees with the apostolical testimony, seeing that Christ Himself refers us to the Scripture interpretation of His Apostles, which they had learned in His own school?

We cannot help, therefore, plainly seeing (as is declared in the Epistle to the Hebrews), that the Son of Man in Psalm viii. is *Jesus;* and therefore also, in the fact of Christ's citing from this psalm and from no other, a Messianic meaning in the cited words. Nay more, we are so bold as to affirm that the *Hosanna to the Lord out of the mouth of children,* which, in the outward special fulfilment, is again figuratively prophetic, is not indeed precisely meant by the words of the psalm. It was the truth thus symbolised which was meant; and this *special literal fulfilment* by the children themselves was seen beforehand by the Spirit, not otherwise than the riding upon the ass in Zechariah. There is a style of vague interpretation in which the *prophesying* word evaporates in the mist of ideal *presentiment;* and it consistently maintains that *nowhere* in the consciousness of the

[1] This commentator goes so far as not at all to find the suffering Messiah in the Old Testament, and thereby to contradict to His face the word of Christ as He enters upon His sufferings, nay, of the risen Lord! See his most unedifying "*Beilage*—ueber die erbauliche Erklärung der Psalmen!"

Hosted by Google

prophets or in the intention of the Spirit is Christ seen and characterised as a historical person, and in His historical reality. But we for ever assert, in opposition to this, that it is precisely the figure of the person of Him who is to come in which *all* prophetic lines meet, in ever-growing accomplishment. Because everything is really included in the person of Christ, the God-Man, the Spirit must prophesy of His person; and in the consciousness of the Spirit of Christ (1 Pet. i. 11) everything of course is definite, concrete, special; the indefinite lies only in the human understanding. For what could be purely accidental, and not significant, not fraught with eternal truth, in the life of Him who is God-Man, and in the relations of that life to the world? Where then the prophetic word surprisingly coincides with apparently accidental details and outward particulars of the fulfilment, in such places there is rather disclosed to our dull sight the profound congruence between prophecy and fulfilment which was absolutely inherent in the eternal decree of God. Thus does *Christ* look into the entire Scripture, which testifies of Him; thus has He at hand, at every turn and step of His history, the fulfilment of some prophecy. He knows, and testifies, that those things were written of John the Baptist which they did to this Elias (Mark ix. 13)—how much more the things that were written of His own person! In the sacred farewell hour of the last supper He cites the 41st Psalm with reference to Judas; in the intercessory prayer (John xvii. 12) He recurs again to the same prophecy; the being reckoned among transgressors in Isaiah He refers (Luke xxii. 37) most concretely to His then impending seizure and execution as a criminal, just as He refers a saying of Zechariah (Matt. xxvi. 31), if possible still more specially isolated, to His being forsaken by His disciples on this night. All these details carry indeed their *significance* in themselves; just as here Christ sees, in the Hosanna of the children, the power and honour which all His enemies cannot overcome, and which the Father will prepare for Him out of the mouth of His babes. But for this very reason does He apply to this the corresponding word of prophecy; and *to the end* that this should happen to Him *was the word written.*

Hosted by Google

THE FIG-TREE: THE POWER OF FAITH AND PRAYER.

(Matt. xxi. 19–22; Mark xi. 14, 22, 26.)

The weeping over the city at His entry; the anger at the desecration of the House of God; the cursing of the barren fig-tree—these three things are connected together in the relation of a climax. The eye of Christ already indeed sees beforehand the judgment of Jerusalem and Israel, when, first of all, He sheds tears of Divine-human emotion over its blinded inhabitants. Then, to speak humanly of the God-Man, He girds Himself to renew by word and deed the testimony which is not yet to be abandoned, and which is yet to awaken and terrify some. In this, however, His holy judicial anger at last breaks out; that anger which will send forth His armies to destroy these murderers (chap. xxii. 7), must even curse those who would not receive the blessing. This so entirely fills His soul, that everywhere He has before His eyes only Israel, the barren ground that is nigh unto cursing (Heb. vi. 8). He sees it and prophetically curses it in the *fig-tree* which presented to Him on the way leaves, indeed, but no fruit. The cleansing of the temple, and the cursing of the fig-tree;—the former still an act reserved for the last day of visitation, the latter a warning figure for the coming that was to follow it—are parallel with and supplementary to each other; as also the accepting of the Hosanna and the tears over Jerusalem, the tears and the anger in the temple, the anger and the healing of the diseased, the saving love and the avenging wrath in the same Divine-human heart.

St Mark has so exactly determined the chronology of this event from the most certain sources (vers. 11, 12, 19, 20), that we may adopt it in our interpretation of the account of St Matthew, who here magnificently groups together, and is careless of chronology in details. As he has already *by anticipation* made the cleansing of the temple, which belongs to the second day, to follow immediately upon the entry into the

Hosted by Google

city (for the two days were as one day), so he records further (vers. 17, 18), only with general indefiniteness, that Jesus at that time passed the night (once and again) in Bethany, and that the cursing of the fig-tree took place πρωΐας, *i.e.*, "on the morning," or *a* morning, upon His return to the city. In like manner, at vers. 19, 20, forgetting the time in the thing, he connects together without interval the immediate withering of the tree and the words of Jesus to the disciples who observed it; although we learn from St Mark, that it was not till the third day (Tuesday) that the withering which followed upon the curse was *observed*, and that thereupon the words of Christ were spoken. The comparison of the two, however, ought to teach us what is most essential for our reading and hearing aright the doings and sayings of Christ, and that the first Evangelist has written his history not without freedom in the Spirit.

Jesus saw a fig-tree[1] in the way (at a distance); a single tree, probably belonging to no one in particular (μίαν again not merely = τινά), which, from the place where it stood, and still more by its adornment of leaves, attracted attention, and promised fruit. Christ, who, on His royal day of honour, had fasted in the sadness of His soul, and who also, on this morning, went with eagerness immediately again to the city,[2] felt hunger, and went up to the tree *if haply He might find anything thereon*, as the leaves at a distance promised. For, in fig-trees, it is well known that the fruit ripens before the leaves appear: and although Christ might not look for fruit of the previous year, which had survived the winter, or late fruit (which could hardly have been allowed to lie on the way), He might yet expect to find early, unusually early,[3] figs: At all events the tree, as *having leaves*, which St Mark specially notices, gave promise of having fruit also. Our Lord, however, found *nothing but leaves only*. The tree therefore was a barren one,

[1] Bethphage, indeed, derived its name from there being many figs there.

[2] This is more probable than, as Lange thinks, "a truly childlike longing" after His people, which led Him to forget His morning meal.

[3] In the Heb. בִּכּוּרוֹת or בִּכּוּרוֹת Hos. ix. 10; Is. xxviii. 4; Jer. xxiv. 2, such as are particularly sought after.

Hosted by Google

which went all to foliage; it promised something extraordinary, and yet—had nothing, *just like the rest of the fig-trees at that time.*[1] Upon this He said: *Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward*—or, *No man eat fruit of thee hereafter*, εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα! He spake it in the consciousness, and with the will that the tree He addressed must and would obey His word; the stern word of might and miracle broke forth like a lightning flash of judgment from the depth of His thoughts, which, in every object, found only the one thing, the inevitably impending judgment upon the people of God. Thus does He work the only miracle of punishment that is recorded of Him (for in that of the devils in the swine there was no punishment, but only a permission); it is done symbolically, however, to the tree, as a testimony for men.[2] All sorts of reasons to account for this action of Christ have well-meaningly, though very mistakingly, been forced upon it; as, for example, that it

[1] This last might be the simple meaning of the much disputed οὐ γὰρ ἦν καιρὸς σύκων;—even were we to translate, It was *not yet* the season of figs. "The vintage was not yet; the figs, therefore, were not yet gathered"—is not so suitable, for early ripe figs might certainly be plucked. But it may also signify, as Hammond first understood it, and many after him (so that in the Stud. and Krit. 1843, i. 131, it should not be spoken of as a new interpretation): It was then no good season or favourable weather for figs, no fig-year. At all events the statement of St Mark is not "somewhat inappropriate," but explains with an entirely correct γάρ why there were then no figs; this however is *meant to say*, Therefore the tree covered with leaves was a hypocrite, which promised something uncommon, and yet—was like the rest. This and nothing else is the *symbolical* fault of this tree, respecting which even Spener must needs express a theological difficulty (see the complete third edition, Part i. p. 13), and acknowledge that Christ had on this occasion divested Himself of His omniscience when He expected fruit. A curiosity of more recent time is the observation of Fritzsche: ἦλθεν ἐπ' αὐτήν, *conscendit* arborem, non enim nisi conscensa ficu eam fructibus destitutam esse cognoscere potuit. To which again Hase says:—"Then might the explainers of the miracle show beautifully how the tender tree had received hurt."

[2] Therefore neither did He "sin against nature" (for which reason Hase will not accept the account); nor did He show a "want of culture" (according to Strauss); nor an unbecoming revenge (according to Woolston); nor even inflict any injustice upon the owner of the tree. He performed a work of sublime power, prophesying in highest dignity.

Hosted by Google

was in order to strengthen the weak faith of the disciples for the Passion-week, as indeed He immediately afterwards speaks of faith; or, to remove, by a manifestation of His Divine power, the offence occasioned by the exhibition of His human weakness in the hunger which unconsciously sought food, etc. What is true in these conjectures is true only because of that manifold significance of all the words and works of the Redeemer, which must, from their very nature, belong to them; but of any conscious aim at such subordinate effects it would be wrong to speak in connection with this word, which was spoken only with one view, and sprang only from one thought, viz., *This tree is Israel!* Already, at Luke xiii. 6–9, had He uttered the parable prepared in the Prophets (Hos. ix. 10; Joel i. 7), and His present action recalls this to mind.[1] There were *leaves* enough—words and hypocritical works; as if it were really the Israel which it was called to be, the people of God wonderfully ripened earlier than all other nations,—but no *fruit!* We feel the depth of this symbol. It corresponds to the fact in this also (as Neander has well observed), that, notwithstanding the show of leaves, the internal unsoundness which must be assumed in the tree, was only hastened to a crisis that must have come in the course of nature. If in the parable just mentioned our Lord speaks, with the Baptist's word, concerning the *last* judgment of *cutting down*, there meets us here, on the other hand, the curse of permanent unfruitfulness as a *first* judgment. May it not be said that Christ can at first punish obstinate sinners only by giving them up and leaving them to their sin, by rejecting and forsaking them? A striking prophetic word speaks also of this: —"I the Lord have dried up the green tree, and made the dry tree to flourish." Ez. xvii. 24. Perhaps this passage also was particularly present to the mind of our Lord, for we may almost suppose that He on every occasion remembered every scripture that was exactly appropriate to what He did. Enough that He Himself tells us once more in Matt. xxiv. 32, what the *fig-tree* is; nay, shows to us (as will there appear) in the remote back-

[1] Without our being under the necessity (with Hengstenberg) of supposing the somewhat far-fetched reference, namely, that the figure Micah vii. 1 was to be embodied.

Hosted by Google

ground the removal of the curse, the "for ever" of which—εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα—is therefore to be taken only with the Old Testament limitation.[1]

And the fig-tree *withered away* παραχρῆμα, on the spot, directly upon the word;—so says St Matthew, and hastens away over day and night to the astonished exclamation of the disciples *when they saw it* (ver. 20); for the πῶς denotes only such an exclamation, not expressly a question. We know that it cannot be the design of an Evangelist thus artificially to produce the appearance of a *greater* miracle (as we in our folly speak), while certainly the παραχρῆμα here repeated to the disciples sounds as if the withering had taken place suddenly, in a moment. So should we understand it without St Mark, whose account leaves us at liberty to suppose that the tree withered away ἐκ ῥιζῶν gradually, till the following day.[2] But yet we are only permitted to suppose this, for the disciples paid no further attention to the tree on the day before, they did not look for its *withering away*, which, indeed, did not expressly lie in the curse. How, then, if the παραχρῆμα of St Matthew were literally true? If the tree not merely forthwith or momentarily *faded* or *began* to wither—but was withered at the very moment? We ought to learn, that it is all one here whether we suppose it to have followed in one minute, or in four and twenty hours; we should lay aside the foolish conception of greater or lesser miracles, nay, an idea of miracles in general, which is foreign to the entire Scripture, and to the Gospels in particular; and should think not so much of the registering of outward events and more of the perceiving and understanding their spiritual import. *This* St Matthew brings prominently out, he specifies the *withering away* of which the word of Christ had not spoken, but which was added for the more abundant fulfilment of that word, and as an outwardly corresponding proof of the certain curse that had been pronounced: "No fruit henceforward!" See how effectual Thy curse has been! the disciples say within them-

[1] Luke xxiii. 31 has also a certain connection with Israel's withering, although, as being generally proverbial, it reaches further and deeper, and finds its nearer parallels in Ez. xx. 47; xxi. 3.

[2] From the roots upward;—this is more than if it were said, *Even to* the root—as it is very inaccurately rendered.

Hosted by Google

selves, and continue in this astonishment. They do not ask, Why hast Thou done this, and what is it to signify? Christ therefore gives them no information on these points. In their exclamation lies concealed only the question, How can such a thing happen to a tree at a word of the Lord? and to this His answer corresponds.

He *repeats* to them (as we now know that He was always ready to do) that word, spoken at chap. xvii. 20, concerning the power of faith over nature and the creature, the omnipotence of perfect undoubting faith, which can command so as that everything must yield that lies in the way of its will.[1] Every opinion which dogmatically protests against the clearly confirmed analogy between the miracle-working of Jesus and that of His disciples, and which affirms that our Lord did not perform His miracles by faith, is to be rejected. How could He perform them otherwise, if He performed them as man? The faith of the Son of God, as the alone perfect faith, is rather set before us, in the Forerunner and Beginner, as a pattern of perfection. Eph. iv. 13. The connection here in the words, *Not only this which is done to the fig-tree,* is quite the same as at John xiv. 12, where the grand idea in its complete generality and depth will demand our interpretation. The ἐὰν ἔχητε in Matt. is again, as at chap. xvii. 20, to be taken emphatically,—If ye have always your usual faith at hand, and ready for exercise, without disturbing and weakening doubt;—this we learn from the imperative ἔχετε in St Mark, which is to be understood only in this sense,—*Have,* hold fast, keep, exercise and use only (your ordinary) *faith in God!* Πίστιν θεοῦ, of course Genit. objecti, as Acts iii. 16; Gal. ii. 20. *Faith in God* stands, with strong emphasis, in opposition to *trust in the creature,* to that doubtful looking to the powers of nature and the creature which forgets or doubts the free power of God;—as if those powers of the creature were anything in themselves, as if it were not self-evident that they obey every believing human will that is in harmony with the will of God, just in the same way as they obey their Creator in general. Such faith in God is the innermost root and the living subsist-

[1] Whether, therefore, "this mountain" here spoken of was that on which the Temple stood, seems a very useless question in the case of a designedly literal repetition.

Hosted by Google

ence of all faith; faith in Christ also develops itself only from it, and rests upon it as its foundation. This our Lord declares also to His disciples (John xiv. 1) for their comfort and encouragement, presupposing the faith which they already have in God; just as here, Mark xi. 22, the πίστις θεοῦ is first the faith in God's power, which was certainly not wanting to the disciples, but then the ἔχειν is to make it thoroughly living and perfect. We say, indeed, many or all of us, not without truth, "I believe in God!" but Christ says to us here, if *that* is really and entirely true, then are ye lords over the creature.

As, at John xiv. 13, 14, *prayer* follows immediately upon the working of miracles, so here. For, in the first place, "Prayer is the utterance of faith, and faith the soul of prayer" (as Rambach says); there can then be no saying with effect to the mountain, Be thou removed! without a laying hold on the power of God *by prayer*, in that command. Even when the Son, in His humanity, said, 'Lazarus, come forth!' this was accompanied by the words, 'Father, I thank Thee that Thou hast heard Me!' Even those words of boldest faith which break forth from us with sudden vehemence, and in which we too bid mountains or trees (Luke xvii. 6) to be removed, are only prayers at once expressed in act, expressions of faith suddenly seizing its object, not doubting that God at all times hears; and they are therefore a coincidence of the praying and receiving in undivided certainty. But because we, with our weak faith, seldom and with difficulty rise so high; because for us, sinners, is ordained the slower learning and exercising of faith in the way of prayer in particular; therefore does our Lord go on to speak of *praying*, immediately after having spoken of *commanding*. This, in so far as it concerns us, is as much as to say,—And if you do not yet succeed with the former, give yourselves all the more earnestly to the latter. Everything must *yield* to your faith, everything must fall to your prayer in faith, so that ye shall receive it. Yea truly *all things* πάντα ὅσα ἄν, as both Evangelists agree in expressing it; and as all the promises of Scripture and all the experience of believing suppliants have proved—since that most ancient promise of Job xxii. 27. God assuredly gives what we have prayed for, but in His own time, and often in a different manner and form from what we thought

Hosted by Google

in our prayer; for His hearing is a true hearing, and on this very account, far above and beyond what we ask or think, Eph. iii. 20. But *we*, alas! often overlook and neglect the true *receiving;* we had faith for asking, but have not or do not hold fast the faith for receiving, as may be seen in the remarkable narrative Acts xii. 15.

Finally, St Mark alone (vers. 25, 26) adds a repetition from the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vi. 14, 15); and we give credit to the exactness of his entire narrative so far as to believe that Christ actually said this here. But why precisely here? Why does He call to mind this principal point in what He here teaches concerning believing prayer? (As it is not to be supposed that, on every occasion, everything that belonged tc this subject was repeated.) Just because there is a secret *doubting* in the heart which breaks and hinders the power of prayer, when the heart is not perfectly ready, conscious of its own guilt, to exercise forgiveness, when there is any ban of enmity and implacableness. This is what the Apostle means in 1 Tim. ii. 8, Without *wrath* and doubting. This profound truth in general seems to us quite a sufficient reason for what is here added; and we must regard it as too artificial to understand it in still closer connection with what was done to the fig-tree, as if it meant,—Be not ye *angry* unduly at the sin of Israel, or of any one! Curse not the sinner as I have done the fig-tree! For the disciples could hardly yet have thought of the symbolical significance of this curse, while Christ also has not noticed it in His whole answer to them. But that He here graciously speaks again of *forgiving*, immediately after having *cursed* in holy anger, is a circumstance which always retains its important significance for *our* consideration of the whole transaction.

Hosted by Google

CHRIST'S ANSWER RESPECTING HIS AUTHORITY TO THE WILLFULLY IGNORANT: THE BAPTISM OF JOHN: THE TWO SONS: THE WICKED HUSBANDMEN: THE CORNER-STONE.

(Matt. xxi. 24–44; Mark ix. 29–xii. 11; Luke xx. 3–18.)

Although our Lord, after the first encounter with His adversaries (who, while He continues the same, also continue the same in their enmity to Him, Matt. ver. 17), no longer passes the night in Jerusalem, He yet resorts to the *temple* daily, as long as they leave Him life:—this the three Evangelists record, as evident of itself, only in a participial construction. He *walks* and *teaches* in His accustomed manner; patiently as if He were beginning anew, calmly as if no danger threatened Him: He *preaches the Gospel*, for which He is sent, as St Luke once more expresses the general import of His teaching. Thereupon these poor priests and elders, who are not at all poor for His Gospel, repeat—shall we say impudently or timorously, ludicrously or pitifully?—that old question (John ii. 18) respecting the authority and attestation of what He did as a prophet. The more complete expressions, especially in St Mark (comp. also Luke xix. 47, and Matt. xxvi. 3), leave us to understand a more or less official, formal inquisition, coming upon Him with a sudden surprise. But their proud words are very remarkable. They persist in *asking* down to the last, even after a thousandfold answer has been given; and yet they themselves know not how or what they shall ask. Τ*αῦτα ποιεῖς*—What things, then? Was it the teaching, which was certainly not forbidden in the temple? Or the healing of the blind and lame, so that they asked for signs in proof of signs? Had He not already shown many signs since that first Passover at Jerusalem, and in all the land, even to the raising again of Lazarus; *many signs*, as they themselves confess? Therefore, indeed, they dare not now put the question in the same form as at John ii. 18. Therefore they can only comprise all the three years of His powerful teaching and working in a foolish *ταῦτα* (just like the *τοῦτο*, Acts iv. 7, where they again begin anew with the disciples), in

Hosted by Google

which must be included, also, the manifest sign, ver. 17. They now again ask for proof in the face of a three years' exhibition of proof, after three years'-telling and testifying He is now again to tell them! The double question is probably to be understood thus,—What sort of power, right, and authority dost Thou lay claim to (Divine or human), whom dost Thou give Thyself out to be? And then, Who has given Thee authority, who has commissioned and qualified Thee to do these things, or who authenticates Thee therein? But understand it as we will, it has scarcely a rational meaning. In their question they say, We know not! while they know it well. Therefore, Christ cannot answer them otherwise than by driving them to this confession, by convicting them ever more sharply, from this time onwards, of the charge, *Ye would not* (chap. xxiii. 37). This is the import of all He says to them in these last days; the last grace also received in vain, and issuing, through their own fault, in their condemnation, so that they *are compelled to judge themselves.* This is the fundamental idea that pervades the whole of Christ's answers down to Matt. ver. 45.

He answers them by rebuke and threatening, *inasmuch as He appeals to their own consciousness and their own judgment.* He discloses to them, first of all, *rebukingly*, the *ground* of their hypocritical *unbelief*, with an appeal to their own *consciousness* (vers. 24–32); and then, *threateningly*, the *consequences* of this unbelief, which knows not, and refuses to know, the *doom* which their own *verdict* must pronounce (vers. 33–44). These are the two principal parts of the whole passage, which, when thus viewed, becomes an integral whole.

In the first half, the counter question of Christ respecting the testimony of John discloses to them the already incontrovertible ground and beginning of all the testimonies hitherto given; it detects in them the ground of their sin, that they knew but would not *say*, *i.e.*, *acknowledge* it; and thus ver. 27 contains already the first answer to their question, an answer appropriate to them and sufficient. Upon this—after they by their "we know *not*," have acknowledged that they *do* know, and in order to hold up before them that they *would not*—Christ, patiently going back and really beginning again anew, appeals to the *testimony*, not of John himself merely, but in addition, *of those*

Hosted by Google

sinners who had believed on Him—and thus keenly convicts the hypocrites who have yet not believed on Him. First comes the *parable* representing their conduct as *individuals*, showing how each one for himself does not do what he says; and, here again, they must themselves decide (ver. 31). Pressing inexorably closer upon them there follows, to complete their confusion, the plain and direct *Fabula docet:* Ye have judged yourselves; ye are the impenitent ones, in comparison with penitent publicans and harlots!

Still not enough—*Hear another parable!* And they must stand still; held fast by a Divine force, they cannot go away, they cannot interrupt Him. The *second* parable depicts clearly to their view the consequence of this unbelief, which knows and yet will not know—the last capital crime against the Son of God, the guilt of which had already been incurred in their counsel of murder—and the *sentence* against them for this. As, in the similitude of the two sons, their conduct as individuals, as private persons so to speak, is described, so now our Lord set before them, quite as historically as prophetically, their *official* conduct *as a whole.* He *tells* them what their predecessors in office did to the messengers of God; and in like manner what they *will do* to the *Son*, who has been sent last. Thus they have the answer to the question:—Who art Thou, and who sends Thee? Not only, however, does He in the parable put the confession into their own mouth (ver. 38), but they must pronounce the *sentence* themselves which He now emphatically *confirms!* The parable, which is likewise founded upon Scripture texts, is followed again by a figurative passage of Scripture (ver. 42); and then there is the direct and proper expression for this (ver. 43), with a return to the metaphor of the passage, and a reference to other kindred passages (ver. 44). Their present offence at Him whom they rejected, their future sentence from the exalted One—is the end of the first discourse and answer; but it is at the same time only the beginning of an entire series of parables, answers, and threatenings, by which they are now (chap. xxii. 23) completely convicted, condemned, and *dismissed.*

Hosted by Google

Vers. 24, 25. The three Evangelists agree in the designative ἕνα λόγον; but by this is to be understood not so much "one short *word*,"[1] as rather "one *thing*," a very simple *something*—as the continuation shows, *which, if ye tell Me.* St Luke, bringing out the sense more concisely, puts it in the form of a challenge: *Tell Me!* St Mark, still more strongly, has an emphatically repeated *Answer Me!* before and after the question. St Matthew adheres without change to the original form,—If ye tell Me this, then I will also tell you. *Ye hypocrites!* Ye are not in earnest with your asking and telling; ye asked this question three years before, as of Me, so of one before Me, and yet have not accepted the answer! Had ye believed him, ye would have had no need of further questioning. Who does not perceive, without many words, how properly and significantly our Lord here goes back to John the Baptist? He was not merely the last and latest prophet, who, although he did no miracle, was yet acknowledged by the people, and, on account of the people, by the rulers;[2] but, in addition to this, the testimony of this predicted *forerunner* was the plainly acknowledged beginning of the day of Christ: we have only to look back on the whole train of thought in chap. xi. Our Lord names the *baptism* of John, and certainly means by this (as Acts i. 22, x. 37, xviii. 25), the entire office of the Baptist, his whole commission and appearance, inclusive of his preaching of repentance and his testimony concerning Christ, see ver. 32. But, according to John i. 25, it was precisely the baptism with which he sought to baptize the Jews, as well as the Gentiles, the righteous as well as sinners, that was the principal thing which had the appearance of an assumption, and in which the authority from above was to be recognised. In the πόθεν Christ answers the question, *By what authority;*—and in the ἐξ οὐρανοῦ (which transcends all ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, and is on purpose thus reverently expressed), He has, at the same time, given the first indirect answer to the question, Who art Thou? John xix. 9; iii. 31.

[1] Certainly not, only one word in reply to your two; for Christ's reply actually proposes *also* two questions, and besides, is calmly introduced by a preface, in striking contrast with *their* angry brevity.

[2] So to speak, an altogether new example of a prophetic *extraordinaria vocatio*, as Anton (Harmon. Erklärung der Evang.) expresses himself.

Hosted by Google

Ver. 27. Thus has He caught them in their own net. There remains for them only one of two things: either to acknowledge the divine authority of the Baptist, from which all the rest then follows; or "to come into collision with the unanimous consciousness of the people," with a boldness for which, as Christ knew, they were not bold enough,—not, however, from the fear of God, but from the fear of men. The three Evangelists very strikingly represent the *thoughts* of their hearts,—which were here certainly not uttered in words,—as if they had been outwardly expressed; the hypocrites think only of what they might *say*, and what He would then *say;* not of what is right and true in conscience before God. And yet their conscience already pronounces their own sentence, anticipating the question, *Why* do ye not then believe him? This is a question from His lips which they would, at any cost, avoid; but our Lord gives the poor hypocrites afterwards a gratuitous answer to this so much dreaded question, seeing that they have already asked it themselves. For the rest, it is here presupposed, on the one hand, that the majority of the πρῶτοι τοῦ λαοῦ did not actually *allow themselves to be baptized* (Luke vii. 30);—although *Christ* (ver. 22), by the "*believe him*," does not mean so much this outward reception of the Baptist, as the repenting and coming to the Messiah; and then that the great majority of the people, although quite as impenitent, yet obstinately held John to be a prophet, especially since his death.[1] How, then, are they to escape from this dilemma, since it is equally hard for them to *confess* or to *deny* the truth? Taking hasty counsel of their cunning wisdom they find a third middle course, in which, however, their wisdom becomes mere folly. They, the great knowers, who in ordinary cases have their "*We know!*" always at hand, are, after their arrogant question, reduced to the shift and the shame of saying for once, in presence of the surrounding people, and in answer to a question which closely concerned their office,—*We know not!*[2] This was indeed before Christ as much as to say,

[1] Compare Matt. xiv. 5 and Luke xx. 6, πεπεισμένος; the people showed so determined an adherence to this conviction, that the leaders were afraid of being *stoned* if they contradicted it.

[2] As they also do not directly deny it, Hamann is, strictly speaking, somewhat inaccurate when he says,—"The nearer they are to the truth,

Hosted by Google

We know it well, *but will not say it;*—in which many a so-called "honest doubter" resembles them, when he will not receive conviction. And to all such the same simple answer properly belongs: Neither do I tell you what ye wilfully ask, and what ye *only thus* "know not."

Vers. 28–31. This first parable, with its interpretation, coming before the second, serves exactly the purpose of a transitional and intermediate word, although only St Matthew has preserved this also so completely. What think *ye?* Thereby Christ grafts immediately upon their confession, which they in vain tried to conceal, the question, But do ye wicked ones *know* perhaps *this* which I am going to say to you, instead of an answer? This very simple parable, in which these supreme knowers having declared themselves ignorant are catechised like school-children, points back to the two sons (Luke xv. 11), as also to the saying on the Mount (Matt. vii. 21), (on account of which latter reference, the son says to the father, κύριε, comp. Gen. xxxi. 35). But the similitude of the "vineyard" prepares the way for the following parable; only that, in the first, the "working in the vineyard," which is afterwards to be taken in an official sense, still appears as the equal and general obligation of every one—of the publican as of the ruler in Israel. (A circumstance which is, at the same time, not to be overlooked as a hint for the more extended application of chap. xx. 1.) To do the will of the Father here signifies, in sincere faith and obedience to yield compliance to every message which God sends, to repent, to believe, to come to Christ. Keeping the commandments and fulfilling the law is here spoken of only as a point of contact in so far as this is the *first* expression of the "saying and not doing" on the part of the Pharisees (chap. xxiii. 3). Strictly speaking, our Lord means by the command of the Father, as He Himself immediately after indicates, the preaching of the Baptist; viewed, however, as the conclusion and sum of all the calls collectively that had come to the Jews. The circumstance that in the parable one son is called after the other, is by no

the more obstinately they deny it," and finds in their conduct "something of the miracles which Satan is able to bring to pass in our heart, when we give place to him there." At bottom, however, he is quite right, as is said above.

Hosted by Google

means to be understood as signifying a *succession of time*, for the ὡσαύτως, on which the emphasis rests,[1] could only thus be represented; on the other hand, the son who was at first refractory, and afterwards bethought himself, takes the first place as πρῶτος, because, according to ver. 31, this precedency (the προάγειν) properly belongs to him. Although it is sons who are spoken of (ὁ δὲ), and grown up sons such as were fit for working in a vineyard, yet the name τέκνα, τέκνον is given to them, in order that the Father's right and love may appear all the more strongly. Was there not really, for the heart and conscience, such an affectionate tone of the Father's voice, even in the Baptist's rough, rebuking call to repentance? Although the first son answers so wilfully to his father's face, *I will not!* (without "sir" or "father," without any pretext such as "I cannot," Luke xiv. 20)—yet this *first* one is, at least, *honest*, both in his refusal, and in his subsequent change of mind; and in this remains his superiority as compared with the hypocrite. (Μεταμελεῖσθαι, the parabolic expression for μετανοεῖν.) The other answers with his ἐγὼ κύριε (= הִנֵּנִי, Behold I am ready, Acts ix. 10); not that he only afterwards resolved on following a worse course, but he speaks already with a falseness which is more hateful than any οὐ θέλω. Even if it had been said in the same spirit as a foolish *child* hastily promises everything in order to get away from his father, it would have been less culpable; Christ, however, does not mean here even those empty promises in which there is yet some truth, but the boldness of hypocrites whose heart from the very first says, *I will not!* while the lips say, *I go!* The concluding question, severely as it shames them, contains, at the same time, in the background, a gracious invitation even to these hypocrites still to repent; inasmuch as the obedience, which was afterwards resolved upon, is encouragingly accepted and acknowledged. We have no great objection to the reading ὁ ὕστερος, which is received by Lachmann, and

[1] And with which the reading ἑτέρῳ is at all events to be preferred, since δευτέρῳ would press too strongly the succession of time. Of an *older* and *younger* son there is nothing said here (as some have thought, and have explained the *elder* of heathenism as being before Judaism). Such a reference would destroy the force of the simple representation of the two sons together.

Hosted by Google

defended and interpreted by Schweizer (Stud. u. Krit. 1839, 4); for it appears reasonable enough that these hypocrites, struck with shame at having such simple questions put to them, would not answer directly ὁ πρῶτος, but would say, half hesitatingly and abruptly, ὁ ὕστερος scil. ἀπελθών,—that is, the *after one*, he who *afterwards* went and did the Father's will. Certainly this is quite admissible, and becomes even a striking confession extorted from them, that to do what is required, although it should be *afterwards*, is yet accepted;[1] but we still think, in opposition to Schweizer, that this reading and interpretation is not necessary, and that πρῶτος is not so very perplexing as he represents it. For if they did say this latter, we might then find in it, on the other hand, the unconscious acknowledgment that the ὕστερος justly stands in the parable already as the πρῶτος; and our Lord, taking up this, might go on to say, *Yes! so it is*, those who at least afterwards bethink themselves go before you as first!

Vers. 31, 32. The popular turn which Luther gives to the words in his translation, "they *may sooner* enter into the kingdom of heaven"—does not deviate from the general truth, which however is only to be derived and inferred from the text, namely, that gross, daring sinners, at least honest in their open acts of sin, may sooner be saved than the wicked *hypocrites*, who are long hardened against the impression of the truth; of *whose* "good works" what Amsdorf says is perfectly true, that they are detrimental to salvation. But it has happened to Luther here, as often, that by a well-meant popularising of the sense he has lost the proper idea of the text, that direct thought which he ought first to have *rendered*. Future eternal salvation is indeed spoken of here, in so far as the comprehensive expression "enter into the kingdom of heaven," and the entire parable, points back to chap. vii. 21; still, in this εἰσέρχεσθαι, as in the Sermon on the Mount (see our interpretation of chap. vii. 13, 14), is already included the whole *way of righteousness*, repenting, believing, being converted, obeying;—and not only so, but it is this that is *chiefly* spoken of. The προάγειν corresponds to the ὑπάγειν καὶ ἐργάζεσθαι in the parable, and to the πιστεύειν

[1] Which the Lord God had long before graciously declared and certified to His people; for example Ez. xviii. 21–23; xxxiii. 12–16.

Hosted by Google

αὐτῷ in the explanation of it that follows. It expresses something already past: inasmuch as they *have done* the will of the Father, they have come and entered into the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord uses naturally only the Present tense, προάγουσιν ὑμᾶς, in order to intimate a general truth which is here exemplified, and which goes beyond the most immediate application of ver. 32—viz.: So is it now and always; such people as the publicans and harlots go before such as *you!* This means, then, first of all (as interpretation of the πρῶτος and ὕστερον, which hinted at the same truth beforehand in the parable, whether we understand the one or the other to have been named in the answer), *They go before you, they take your place,* so to speak. But it also plainly signifies,—They *show you the way,* they are your patterns and teachers, who should even now incite you to follow them; for thus is it afterwards in ver. 32, ὑμεῖς δὲ ἰδόντες. If, in the Sermon on the Mount, the Pharisees were put on a level with the *publicans,* they are now placed far behind the *penitent* publicans, with allusion to the parable at Luke xviii. 10, 14; but, in order that this may be expressed with all emphasis and completeness, *harlots* are mentioned along with them,—those gross "sinners" (Luke vii. 39), who were held in perfect contempt of the Pharisees; and both of these are mentioned, not without reference to the fact that among the Apostles there were publicans, and among the zealous adherents and followers of Christ there were converted harlots. At the same time we know that avarice and sensuality, the service of mammon and adultery, were the secret sins of the Pharisees, according to the two poles of all creature-love.—The case is here again similar, as regards Luther's translation, to what we noticed before,—"John *taught* you the *right* way;" neither of these two words is properly in the text, but a more significant expression, viz., He came to you ἐν ὁδῷ δικαιοσύνης. The *way of righteousness,* or the way of God (Matt. xxii. 16), is the right way of true wisdom in the commandment and will of God, אֹרַח צַדִּיקִים Prov. viii. 20, xii. 28, and דֶּרֶךְ צַדִּיק xvi. 31 (LXX. ὁδοὶ δικαιοσύνης), also דֶּרֶךְ הַשָּׁפֵל xxi. 16, where LXX. ὁδὸς δικαιοσύνης; see again in St Peter, who makes diligent use of the Proverbs, 2 Pet. ii. 21, where what is spoken of in the most proper sense is the way of conversion to God, the ἀποφυγεῖν τὰ μιάσματα

Hosted by Google

τοῦ κόσμου ἐν ἐπιγνώσει τοῦ κυρίου.[1] John came in, or on, or with the way of righteousness; *i.e.*, not merely he *taught* and announced it to you in the preaching of repentance, but he *showed* it to you in like manner as a προάγων, as one who himself walked therein, and, moreover, in the way of Old Testament legal piety, which ye understand and which is so agreeable to you. For here, as we said above in the general survey of the passage, the testimony of John is combined with the testimony of those who *believed on him* (ver. 32, three times, precisely as at ver. 25, in the thoughts of the Pharisees). Now He says plainly: "Ye were not believingly obedient to the will of God in the preaching of John; ye did not even *repent afterwards*, when the believing sinners and sinful women showed you the way, and your repentance would even yet have been accepted.[2] Ye are that other son!" In order to the effect of this application, it matters not that, strictly speaking, the rulers and Pharisees did not answer, "I go, Sir," to the preaching of the Baptist (in that case, the first coming of many, Matt. iii. 7, must be so explained). The parable has a freer range in its import, and means:—*Thus is it with you in general* in your hypocrisy (chap. xxiii. 3), and therefore did ye say also by your conduct toward John, "We have long since repented, we need no new repentance!" Therefore ye received not his testimony concerning Me, the Messiah, that by coming to Me ye might enter into the kingdom of God;—which is, in conclusion, meant by the πιστεύειν αὐτῷ, according to their own thoughts, ver. 25.

Ver. 33. The ἤρξατο ἐν παραβολαῖς of St Mark denotes a *second* beginning of instruction mainly parabolic: our Lord speaks, as before to the people in Galilee, so now to the rulers in Jerusalem (Matt. xxii. 1), in parables, of which the Evangelists probably gave but one or two principal specimens. The

[1] Pfenninger, therefore, is altogether wrong:—John came with the most righteous cause!

[2] "Must (*i.e.*, should, might) they not perceive the sanctifying power of God in John? That must be of God which leads the ungodly to God." Braune.

Hosted by Google

πρὸς τὸν λαόν of Luke is somewhat less exact, and will only say *before the people*, so that they also heard them. St Matthew is again the most exact with his immediate continuation: "*Hear*, ye self-willed questioners, who know not, and yet know well enough; hear as a further answer, and for your further conviction, *another* parable—I have not yet done with you, leave Me not till ye have heard it!" The foregoing parable was for them as sinners in common with others; this is for them in their office as leaders of the people, according to which they should have been only προάγοντες ἐν ὁδῷ δικαιοσύνης, only preachers of righteousness, while, on the contrary, they have, from their fathers even until now, shamefully rejected the messengers of God. Christ discovers to them their sin, announcing to them their judgment, and that of the whole people; but at first lets them again convict themselves in the milder form of the *parable*. The figure of the vineyard, as the particulars in which it is carried out show, goes back to the well-known text of prophetic rebuke, Is. v. 1–7 (comp. already iii. 14). There the first ל in לִידִידִי ver. 1, is equivalent to *for*. *Instead of, in the name of* My friend will I sing a song. Hence it is called שִׁירַת דּוֹדִי, a song of My beloved, which he himself is to sing, and in which he is to make a lament over his vineyard; for at ver. 3 the discourse passes into the first person (which the LXX. expresses from the beginning). Let it be granted that the עִזֵּק, ver. 2, means properly hewing and digging around (as the סִקֵּל beside it certainly means *elapidare;* see chap. lxii. 10), still the words of Christ, as given by Matt. and Mark, allow all the more value to the φραγμὸν περιέθηκα of the LXX., as this is actually found in Isaiah ver. 5, *primo loco*. Hedging round is the first thing which the idea of a כֶּרֶם presupposes, hence taking away the hedge again is the first thing when it is destroyed and abandoned. *Hedge*, *tower*, and *wine-press*,[1] belong, in Isaiah, only

[1] As spoken by Christ, who always pays due respect indeed to the word of Scripture, and yet claims an equal and not a merely subordinate authority for His own, the second and third are freely transposed! Πύργος is a watch-tower or watchman's house; ὑπολήνιον, in Mark (as Is. xvi. 10; Joel iii. 13, LXX.), the vat or trough into which the pressed wine runs; ληνός, in Matt., the wine-press as a whole (Is. 5 προλήνιον) which was *dug* deep in the ground with an outlet, through which the expressed juice flowed.

Hosted by Google

to the development of the metaphor, and probably intimate nothing more there than in general, The Lord of the vineyard entirely performed His part towards it, s. ver. 4. We can therefore abide by this here also (which seems to be recommended by the transposition of the expressions; for though the hedge plainly points to the law which separates the Jews from the Gentiles, Eph. ii. 14,[1] it is yet difficult to assign a distinct and separate meaning to the tower and the wine-press, which in the commentators run very much into each other. Melancthon comes nearest to the distinction, when he compares the apparatus for pressing out and obtaining the produce to the *ministerium doctrinæ*, and the prominent watch-tower which affords protection and ornament, to the *regnum et templum*.[2] A considerable alteration and extension of the basis given by the prophet consists further in this, that in Isaiah the vineyard itself is represented as unfruitful, bringing forth only בְּאֻשִׁים instead of grapes, while here prominence is given to an offence on the part of the *keepers* of the vineyard, who withheld the produce from the proprietors. Whether in the metaphor the ἐξέδοτο, which is the same in all the three Evangelists, means to let out for rent in money (Cantic. viii. 11; Is. vii. 23), or for a return in fruit (like the Roman *partiarii*), matters little; yet ὁ καιρὸς τῶν καρπῶν and τοὺς καρπούς (Matt. ver. 34), seems to prove that ἀπὸ τοῦ καρποῦ (Mark and Luke) is to be understood not merely of the former (καρπός produce); besides, we think the delivery of the fruit *in natura* to be much more proper for the interpretation.[3] Only the three following propositions are properly of main importance for the sense of the whole: that God first of all performed *His part* in every respect by a manifold

[1] The explanation given by some of the fathers, for example Irenaeus, is far too much of a merely outward kind, according to which the *hedge* signifies the boundaries of the Jewish land, the *tower*, Jerusalem;—the *wine-press* as receptaculum prophetici spiritus would but ill correspond to this, being a transition to a different sphere of thought.

[2] Zeller (Beugg. Monatsbl. 1851, Nr. 9) explains the *wine-press* of all the institutions for teaching, educating and training; the *tower* of all the institutions having regard to control, the administration of justice, discipline, protection.

[3] Zeller: They have cleared away *the produce* of the vineyard *in natura* to deliver it into the storehouse of the Master.

Hosted by Google

and complete preparation; that He committed the vineyard to certain *officials* in Israel, not, however, as their property, but that they might see to its bringing forth fruit; that when this also was done, He *went into a far country*. Observe, in the second of these, the acknowledgment of the office in respect of right and duty, which Christ here expresses just that He may rebuke their official sins; and in the last (as at Matt. xxv. 15; Mark xiii. 34; Luke xix. 12, the same thing recurs), the significant reference to a return of God after the first manifestation, for the purpose of trial and in expectation of finding fruit. St Luke adds χρόνους ἱκανούς, which, according to his usage (chap. viii. 27; Acts viii. 11; xiv. 3), signifies a good, proportionably long, *due* time, as we say. It is the intermediate period from the first planting of Israel until the time when by right it could and should have ripened into fruit, from Moses and Joshua on to the first prophets, as is plain from what immediately follows. That these prophets came partly also before the time of David and Solomon shows further, that Melancthon's explanation of the tower by *regnum et templum* is not precisely to be referred to the kingdom and temple properly so called; but, if a special interpretation is to be given to it, to the setting up of rulers in general, and the first tabernacle of the sanctuary, Ex. xv. 17.

Vers. 34–36. That there was also a *time of fruit* already under the old covenant is evident; the Lord had done enough for His people to warrant His demanding of all, as the fruit of His sowing and planting, that piety which, in manifold degrees and forms, was actually found in a small company of saints. That the law might produce legal righteousness, the innermost principle of which, with all diligence in works, should yet be a sincere humility and constant repentance—that the promise before and together with the law might find faith, and an expecting people be prepared for the Lord, such as the Baptist last of all would prepare, and as are represented in Zachariah and Simeon—this was what the keepers of the vineyard were to see to from the first, for this they were responsible, and this was justly required of them. It was especially required at that period when, after the *time of blossom* under David and Solomon, the season of fruit was now come by right in the fullest sense; although the application also to the former time may not be quite

Hosted by Google

excluded. Those extraordinary servants, the *prophets*, who were more immediate *messengers* of God, and who are very plainly to be understood here by the servants, hold however a different position from those who were appointed to the regular office. It is a very remarkable circumstance, the attentive consideration of which suggests thoughts which extend much further, that the maltreatment and killing of almost all the prophets (for only thus on the whole is it of course meant) is quite as decidedly affirmed in the New Testament as it is not recorded in the Old Testament, which is quite silent in regard to this in those very places where it should properly have been mentioned. For although, in the history of Elijah and Jeremiah, for example, there occur enmity and persecution even to the danger of death, yet in such passages as 2 Kings xvii. 13, 14; Jer. vii. 25, 26, xi. 7, 8, xxv. 4–7, xliv. 4, 5, we do not read of ill usage, but only of disobedience and contempt. Only in Neh. ix. 26 is it expressly said, "they *slew* the prophets." But what is recorded in the tradition of the Jews themselves along with the canonical word of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Amos and others, is generally confirmed by the Lord Jesus, not merely here in the parable, but in plain words, Matt. xxiii. 31, 37, which Stephen afterwards quite as strongly repeats Acts vii. 52; comp. also Heb. xi. 36–38.[1] The representation in the parable is of course not to be explained as specially historical, and when Matt. ver. 35 mentions *three* servants, of whom even the one who came off best was at least scourged, this number is only intended to indicate that there was no want of messengers (that the patience of the Lord was not satisfied with one messenger), just as the gradation in the ill-treatment from beating to stoning indicates what was done as the general rule. St Mark and St Luke, perhaps more exactly according to the original expressions of Christ, dilate what St Matthew has compressed into one verse; the three servants are, however, mentioned also in their account. In other respects, which are not of essential importance, the repre-

[1] What, then, has made them so cruel? asks Anton here, going beyond the parable indeed, yet with justice, and he answers:—The *vacuum*, the want of fruit; they would not let the *deficit* be made manifest. It vexes them when *visitatores* come who will have fruit! They *must* let such go away empty, therefore they become cruel.

Hosted by Google

sentation is somewhat different: St Mark gives prominence first of all to the "sending away empty" as the principal idea;[1] and he makes only the third to have been killed, while the second was mocked and shamefully handled.[2] St Luke begins also with the beating (in which all the three agree), but in the gradation of ill-treatment passes from that to the ἀτιμάζειν, and thence to the τραυματίζειν; and he entirely omits the second sending mentioned in Matt. ver. 36, which Mark, at least, adds in the "and many others." We see here, as always, the same relative characteristics of the Evangelists: St Luke least of all exact; St Mark, in his graphic style, often making a nearer approximation to the original words of Christ, often again giving only a free representation; St Matthew alone, although with condensed brevity, preserving entire the most important fundamental ideas. Thus, in this place, he alone has distinctively marked the two different periods of sending, which, at all events, must correspond to a historical view of the facts upon the whole. But we do not venture absolutely to determine when the second period, at which *more than the first* were sent, is to be understood as commencing; since the Old Testament history of the labours and testifyings of the prophets, before and after Samuel, only indicates much that is passed over. In general we might find the ἄλλους πλείονας among the kings after the time of Elijah and Elisha, and the

[1] In connection with which it is to be observed that, in the parable, the fruits were kept back by the presumption of the servants; in the explanation, however (which was not to be represented here also), there are no fruits to be had when asked for.

[2] That κεφαλαιοῦν, Mark xii. 4, in no case signifies to behead or kill, is evident from the ἀπέστειλαν. It is used here in the entirely new and special signification *in capite vulnerare* (Vulg.); Casaubon has directed attention to the fact that the verbs in όω and ίζω correspond to each other, and γαστρίζειν in Aristoph. and Laert. is only εἰς τὴν γαστέρα τύπτειν. Lange quite correctly:—"They handled him roughly on the head." On the other hand, Lightfoot and Usher would apply here the only other warranted signification of κεφαλαιοῦν (to reckon, sum up):—They throw as a *mockery* of a "reckoning" stones at his head (instead of fruit)—but this interpretation is unsuitably artificial; if that signification is assigned to κεφαλαιοῦν, we must, at all events, explain it with Dupont and Lud. de Dieu:—"They made short work and reckoning with him."

Hosted by Google

πρώτους, with whom also it fared ill, in the entire period preceding that; see for example Jud. vi. 8. If, however, we adhere exactly to the season of fruits before indicated, then a second sending must be explained as beginning after the Assyrian captivity with *Isaiah* and Jeremiah.

Vers. 37–39. Here follows the answer—seemingly veiled by the parable, but at the same time quite plain and literal,—to that question which was put at ver. 23: I am *the Son*, as ye *know!* At first, however, Christ does not represent Himself to them as the promised Saviour and Redeemer; but as the last witness for the truth, the last preacher of repentance and grace, according to His prophetical office. This is quite in accordance with the facts of the case, in so far as the rejection of the Son, the last Prophet, and the Prophet in the most proper sense, was only a continuation and consummation of the rejection of all former messengers of God. Indeed, the Son, too, begins with Μετανοεῖτε, and so far is God from remitting or relaxing His claim to receive fruit, that Christ rather seals its legitimacy (as He afterwards Himself produces new fruit in a new sowing of grace by the shedding of His blood, which, in this parable, lies as yet in the background). But herein is displayed the goodness and faithfulness, the patience and long-suffering of God, that "He sends even the first servants to the keepers without weapons, and now sends the Son Himself, the witness of His entire readiness to be reconciled and to forgive, without terror and coercion"[1]—not yet to inflict the deserved punishment, but as a last experiment of goodness. What should He do more to His vineyard and its husbandmen? He had, besides the servants, only His *one beloved* Son; so He sends Him also as the *last*, the same as if He Himself had come to entreat the rebels! This is the very striking and affecting expansion of the idea in St Mark; St Luke represents the culminating point somewhat differently, and yet the same in so far as relates to the fundamental idea, inasmuch as he has a "τί ποιήσω" before, in which God takes counsel with Himself. The three Evangelists agree in their expression of the friendly presupposition on the part of God:—*They will reverence My*

[1] Nitzsch's Sermons, third selection, p. 102.

Hosted by Google

Son! Thus condescendingly in the manner of men does Christ speak of His heavenly Father (in Luke with a ἴσως); comp. Is. lxiii. 8, where there is a similar expression. He will thereby teach that God makes trial of all goodness in men, just as if He knew not beforehand in what cases it will prove in vain; He thus portrays to the wicked ones what, instead of their wickedness, ought to have been their conduct, and thereby holds up their criminality all the more strikingly before their eyes.

For alas! the sad history proceeds further: They saw the Son and did *not* reverence Him! Christ connects the events of the future that were now at hand, and only not yet accomplished in outward act, into one *history* with the past. For, in the murderous decree of the high priests against Jesus, which had now been in existence for a considerable time, in particular since John xi. 53, the awful deed was already as good as done: ver. 38 is really as much history as what goes before; ver. 39 views prophetically beforehand as present what happened a few days afterwards; while ver. 40 first points to the future consequences. That these wilfully ignorant "knowers," although they did not understand the sufferings and sacrificial death of the Messiah (1 Cor. ii. 8) in prophecy, yet, in other respects, knew enough concerning Him to make their conscience respond to the testimony of the Baptist with a Οὗτός ἐστιν—this Christ knew without their telling Him; and He now begins, already before they have crucified Him, to exercise upon them, as the Searcher of hearts, His office as Judge. They knew how to find at once from Scripture the newly-born Saviour, although they had no desire from the first to go to Him with the wise men; that which Nicodemus afterwards, on his first coming to Christ, John iii. 2, says in his "*We* know," he says actually in the name of his colleagues, and as what they in conscience believe; how much more must they have been convinced after three years full of testimonies and signs! As our Lord then referred Nicodemus to the typical serpent in the wilderness, so now, even before He plainly speaks of the rejected corner-stone, there lies in His word an almost unconscious side-glance, in that Spirit who views all as a connected whole, to the typical history of Joseph, which, in its prophetical import, extending even to the final restoration of Israel, has long since

Hosted by Google

been recognised by the simplicity of faith, but very little as yet by orthodox science. *Come, let us kill him*—so it stands in Gen. xxxvii. 20, literally according to the LXX. The coming forth of Joseph from the pit (brought about by God in opposition to the murderous counsel of his brethren), predicted as a mystical resurrection the inevitable fulfilment of those dreams which the enviers also believed, inasmuch as they tried to frustrate them; just as now the murderers of Jesus know that He is Christ, even while they seek to destroy Him. We are therefore to understand the apostolic words in Acts iii. 17, xiii. 27, with that limitation which the word of Christ here gives to them in the parable: they knew not indeed the mystery of the atoning death, and in so far they did not yet know entirely "*what* they did," yet, on the other hand, they knew enough to make it a grievous sin in them to kill the Prince of Life, to reject Him who proved Himself to be the Messiah, the Son of God. Thus wonderfully is the counsel of God fulfilled by the hands of men; and that Christ here discloses and foretells all to them in this manner, belongs further to the testimony which it behoved Him to make respecting His voluntary surrender of Himself. Let us kill the heir, that his inheritance may be ours —is to be understood from John xi. 48: that we may not have to yield up our assumed power to Him. (As King Herod also after his manner had thought and done.) To this counsel of the men belongs the great folly, the wicked delusion, of supposing that this was possible, that the Lord of the vineyard, and Father of this Son, would be without the power to justify the heir, and make good His right; it is the deceit of Satan, *whose* thought it is properly that is therein expressed. It is, at the same time, the fearfully foolish obstinate perseverance in evil which the parable here, almost plainly coinciding with the history, discloses—the great connecting chain of sinning and resisting, which extends from the fathers to the children (chap. xxiii. 31, 32), according to which Christ was already rejected in the prophets, and now from their rejection His rejection also follows by an unconcerted, yet deeply-grounded oneness of enmity against God, in the history of Israel, and of the whole world. That which has happened from of old to the Prophets in Israel, as also to all the wise men and witnesses for the truth

Hosted by Google

among the heathen, now finds its fulfilment and consummation in the Cross of Christ; the rejection of the Son of God is only the culminating point in the general sin of the world, which specially manifested itself in the obstinacy of the Jews.—The *casting Him out* of the vineyard[1] represents the delivering Him up to the Gentiles, as also the putting forth of the crucified One out of the city and camp of God; the remarkably foreseen significance of which is further spoken of in Heb. xiii. 12. By this, in its deepest import, the vineyard was made desolate, the sanctuary laid waste, Israel's title forfeited, and a new society, regarded by them as alien and unclean, founded upon the rejected corner-stone.

Vers. 40, 41. The Lord of the vineyard comes Himself after they have killed the heir; He has done all for His vineyard that goodness and patience could do, and now He will and must also judge it. The very abrupt question, *What shall He do?* points back again to the passage in the prophet (Is. v. 3–6), and summons them to *judge themselves.* In this connection with Isaiah, as also in the entire tendency of Christ's words to appeal to the consciousness and judgment of the hearers themselves (as we saw above), lies the proof of the fact, that St Matthew alone is quite right in making the question of Christ to be answered by them in their confusion. (The two other Evangelists omit this by abridging, and represent Christ as also declaring the sentence which was confirmed by Him. It is at the same time quite consistent with this that, according to St Luke, several of the people who were listening (see ver. 9) may have interposed their μὴ γένοιτο.) The convicted and thoroughly arrested hypocrites[2] must needs pronounce their own

[1] The placing of which circumstance *after* the killing in Mark, is yet only to be understood as in Matt. and Luke: ἀπέκτειναν ἐκβληθέντα.

[2] For certainly these persons themselves, according to the context, and not others of the surrounding hearers, are the speakers in ver. 41. Schleiermacher would regard this as either a *very awkward* change, or even explain it with Eichhorn as an incorrect understanding of the Aramaic;—we, however, have found, from the very beginning of the chapter, the fundamental idea in this, that these persons thus rebuked and put to shame are compelled to pass sentence against themselves. By breaking up the connection as a whole, the interpretation often loses the most important, most decisive vindications of the text.

Hosted by Google

sentence; and they do it with fair pretence, carrying their hypocrisy to the full height, inasmuch as they affect an impartiality just as if they knew not at all that He was speaking of them! This answer is the most complete justification of the judgment against the Jews coming from their own lips, and already an anticipation of that fearful word, chap. xxvii. 25. We might regard it, too, at the same time, as the last, the only remaining, form of Divine *warning* addressed to men—"when they are warned of the deeds which they will do, when they are threatened with that which they purpose doing, when they are brought to the point of pronouncing sentence themselves upon the works which they are just about to perpetrate."[1] But this view of it as an ineffectual warning (once more, so to speak, "they will yet take warning"!) entirely disappears before the judgment which it predicts. Only so much is certain here, "that they were not under any *necessity* of doing what they did, *because* He declared it to them beforehand"—it rather remains the sharpest conviction of their own guilt, that it might be said to them:—Behold, I have told you before, and *yet* ye have done it! Thus do God's decree and man's freedom mysteriously coincide in the whole history of the world, and in its centre-point, the cross of Christ: God knew beforehand the free actions as free, and their result is only, contrary to their design, what God had already before determined.(Gen. l. 20.)—For the rest, the κακοὺς κακῶς ἀπολέσει (according to genuine Greek proverbial usage, which is very remarkable in St Matthew) denotes strongly the just recompense. Erasmus well renders, Mali cum sint, male perdet illos;—miserable they are, and He will miserably destroy them. Even the letting out of the vineyard to others must now be declared by themselves; thus must they depose themselves, and prepare the way for the immediately following words of Christ. Only St Matthew again has the additional clause, pointing to the future,—a prophecy also extorted by the Spirit from these reprobates, viz., *Who will render Him the fruits* ἐν τοῖς καιροῖς αὐτῶν, duly in future every year,—still spoken parabolically.

Ver 42. Our Lord has reached the point at which He aimed

[1] Nitzsch in the sermon before alluded to, § 96.

Hosted by Google

in the parable; He now suddenly leaves it, and in the following words the stone of judgment already falls directly upon their heads. He repeats to the last His old familiar word, which has so often shamed and judged them—Have ye never read in the Scriptures? (St Mark has *also this scripture*,—in addition, namely, to Is. v., and many others which prophesy of the great guilt of Israel, and the great triumph of their rejected and yet exalted, their killed and yet living, Messiah.) The great enigma, now solved, of the *corner-stone*, which, from the resurrection onwards, finds an ever-growing fulfilment, and which pervades the entire New Testament from Acts iv. 11—Christ takes from the Hosanna-psalm, which was universally known among the people, and the echoes of which, as it was sounded forth on the occasion of His royal entry, were still in their ears! He then, at ver. 44, brings it again into connection with other passages from the same *Isaiah*, from whom He had just taken the text about the vineyard; for the connection of the γραφαί, which we even at this day are so slow to learn, is wonderful in our eyes when, in the cross and victory of Christ, we begin to view everything as done *by the Lord*,—as foreseen by the Lord. He does not at first *explain* the passage of Scripture, which was clearly evident to the eyes even of the blind; but, assuming for the moment that they understood it, He immediately adds ver. 43.

Must we, however, in opposition to the perverted and obstinate exegesis even of believing commentators,[1] begin to prove that the 118th Psalm is Messianic, that the corner-stone of which it speaks is a real prophecy of the Spirit respecting Christ? We frankly confess ourselves to be often so vexed by such contentions with brethren who do not understand the *Scripture* that we lose patience; and, however unscientifically, are inclined rather to rebuke them with Christ, Luke xxiv. 25, until their hearts burn, and their burning *hearts* begin to read in the light of the Pentecostal fire what is written. Already do the words added by the people to the Hosanna, Matt. xxi. 9; Mark xi. 10; Luke xix. 38, prove a Messianic interpretation as being then

[1] Ebrard understands Jesus to ask,—Have ye never yet read of a rejected stone—so that He applies the history of that psalm, without doubt (?) David's history, only as an *example!*

Hosted by Google

generally received, and which Christ could not employ as taken for granted if it were false. True, this wondrously profound song embraces, in the design of the prophetic Spirit, whose sublime sounds breathe upon us from it as surely as from any part of the ancient Scripture, the entire history of the triumph of the just, combines in one view the "not dying but living" of the *true* Israel and the triumph of their Lord and Head (as is done also elsewhere in the prophets); still, the fulfilment in the person of Christ is and remains the fundamental meaning, upon which the further application is built. He who will acknowledge in the Old Testament no foreseeing design of the Spirit transcending the human consciousness of the prophets, moving above the typical histories and relations in independent miraculous power, finds the just recompense of this false inspiration-theory—this denial of that very quality which characteristically belongs to the inspired writer, as rightly understood, especially in such passages as that now before us—in a most unworthy degradation of the words of Christ and His Apostles to a mere play upon Old Testament phrases in moments of most exalted and holy earnestness. We *acknowledge* and testify, on the contrary, that our "Christian consciousness"—a more exactly defined one than that of Schleiermacher—throughout resists every interpretation in which the use of the words here cited does not coincide with their true meaning. This, and nothing else, was what the holy Evangelist Luke thought, when he wrote the question of Christ which, if not literally correct, must yet be so in the spirit: Τί οὖν ἐστι τὸ γεγραμμένον τοῦτο; What else but a prophecy of Me and My kingdom?

The Lord of the vineyard *cometh;* but He cometh only in the same Son and Heir who *rises again* from death. Other prophecies have manifoldly spoken of a *rejection* and subsequent glorification of the coming Messiah; already at Luke ix. 22, xvii. 25, has Christ referred His disciples to these. The *builders* who reject Him (בּוֹנִים, οἰκοδομοῦντες, *i.e*, here the *master-builders* who select and arrange the stones), are partly the elders, high-priests, and scribes, who are there named by Christ, partly Israel as a whole, represented and led by them—*this generation* and people, Luke xvii. 25. St Peter, in Acts iv. 11, gives prominence to the first and narrower sense by the pronoun ὑμῶν. The corner-

Hosted by Google

stone is the foundation and chief stone of a new building;[1] for, in Ps. cxviii., viewed as a mystically prophetic festal song for entrance into the temple, it is a building that is spoken of, which, at the same time, is the true house, people, and kingdom of God. (So that it is unnecessary to compare with this the remotely related phraseology in which princes are represented as corners and corner-stones of the people. Zech. x. 4; Is. xix. 13; Jud. xx. 2; 1 Sam. xiv. 38.) The same thing which in the Psalm is called רֹאשׁ פִּנָּה, κεφαλὴ γωνίας, is, in Is. xxviii. 16, אֶבֶן פִּנָּה, λίθος ἀκρογωνιαῖος, as St Paul and St Peter in like manner retain the expression of the LXX. The three Evangelists preserve also precisely the old rendering (with the attraction at the beginning, λίθον ὅν), according to which αὕτη, the Hebraistic expression for זֹאת, stands as neuter: *This* is done by the Lord; *this* is wonderful in our eyes! (Not, as many wrongly infer from 1 Pet. ii. 7: *This stone* is, notwithstanding, a precious stone of wonder in the eyes of *believers*.) In *our* eyes: this the enemies also *must* say, see the fulfilment in Acts iv. 13. Yes, in the eyes of the whole world, the church built on the crucified Jew (see Ullmann's Apologetik), the glorifying of the rejected One, which was the doing of the *Lord*, is the great enigma, miracle, and sign, of the world's history. They had marked this stone with contempt and cast it away, so that no man ventured to lift it up; but God has raised Him up, and made Him the foundation of the building against which even the gates of hell do not prevail. God sends His only-begotten in the flesh to sinners—His highest *grace!* The sinners crucify Him—their horrible *sin*. And yet grace triumphs over sin, nay, out of it prepares the *salvation* of the world!

Ver. 43. First of all, indeed, they who have rejected Him must in their turn be rejected; and salvation passes from the Jews to the Gentiles. The word which now follows takes up the expression "become the head of the corner" from what goes before, and returns at the same time to the parable of the vineyard with a plain interpretation of it. This interpretation, in the free expansion of the figure, deviates from the prophetic basis; for, in

[1] And so this answer of Christ at the end is substantially parallel to that first one at the beginning, John ii. 19. Break down—I build up again! Reject—the rejected becomes a new foundation!

Hosted by Google

Isaiah, *the vineyard* is Israel, therefore laid waste and abandoned; here, however, it is the institution and planting, which has hitherto been in Israel, but is now given over to others—*the kingdom of God.* It is taken from you builders or husbandmen, and therewith, from the entire people; for the former building without this corner-stone must certainly fall. The ἔθνει, which stands opposed to Israel, denotes not the *Gentiles* in common (as Luther has it); but a new people of God gathered from all nations, the true people of God which does not reject the offered grace, the Church which does not again pervert grace through self-will. (Acts xv. 14.) For it is said of this people, ποιοῦντι τοὺς καρποὺς αὐτῆς; in which expression the ποιεῖν καρπούς (instead of ἀποδιδόναι ver. 41) now leads back to Isaiah, and αὐτῆς referred to βασιλεία speaks of the fruits of the kingdom of heaven, *i.e.*, such as are worthy of this kingdom, such as are proper to it.

Ver. 44. St Mark makes the discourse of Christ break off with Ps. cxviii.; St Luke, contrary to his wonted peculiarity, says nothing in this place of the transference of the kingdom to another people. But he does not omit the *concluding word* respecting the *stone*, he rather brings this into close connection with the passage from the Psalm. Christ also proves the Messianic significance of the Psalm by bringing into connection with it other passages in Isaiah, and last of all, a decisive prophecy concerning the kingdom from Daniel, and that too (as is particularly to be observed) with an expression, ἐπὶ τὸν λίθον τοῦτον, "upon *this* alone," which presupposes and affirms the *identity of all these stones* that are spoken of here and there in the *Scriptures.* Can you believe, orthodox theologians, and Christian commentators! that the Son of God has here trifled with an arbitrary combination of Old Testament phrases? Was He one who could do this? Was the tone of His feeling on this occasion such as could have done this? Or, if not, what then remains but that all these *Scriptures* cited by Him, with such holy judicial earnestness, belong to that which is written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man?—The transition or the return from Ps. cxviii. to Isaiah is immediately effected by the allusion to Is. xxviii. 16, where also mention is made of a precious corner-stone, of the sure foundation of all believers. If, in

Hosted by Google

this passage, the idea as yet only embraces generally the proffered refuge and security in God, although of course not without a glance at the Messianic salvation in the background, there is a nearer and more direct reference to the coming Messiah in the other saying, Is. viii. 14, 15, which the Lord distinctly cites here. In this latter passage *Emmanuel* is promised to the people, and such a promise already given beforehand that in faith they could and should triumph with Emmanuel; but Jehovah of Hosts becomes, as Emmanuel, a sanctuary and asylum only to the few disciples, the multitude falls through unbelief into darkness, and there happened then typically what was afterwards to be the designation of the true Emmanuel at His birth (Luke ii. 34), viz.: The Lord and God of Israel becomes to them a stone of stumbling and rock of offence. (Is. נִשְׁבָּרוּ LXX. *συντριβήσονται*, here *συνθλασθήσεται*, which indeed is the same thing.) Finally, however, in order to speak quite plainly, Christ, by the association of direct contrariety, connects with this citation that propheey of the kingdom in Daniel, Dan. ii. 34, 35, 44, concerning the stone that comes without human hands, that becomes a mountain filling the world, and *bruises* all hostile kingdoms and powers. (Dan. תֵּדֵק LXX. ver. 44, *λεπτυνεῖ καὶ λικμήσει*, as here.) In Daniel, just as in the Psalm, *ὁ λίθος οὗτος* is not merely the person of the Messiah, but, along with Him, His people and kingdom; only however, in so far as, and because, it is founded upon Him, does every stone of the entire building participate in the nature and quality of the foundation-stone. And does not our Lord interpret precisely thus here, when in *τὸν λίθον τοῦτον* He connects His words as well with ver. 42 as with the *βασιλεία*, ver. 43? By His impressive conclusion, therefore, He will say neither more nor less than what corresponds to the true inmost sense of the passages of Scripture, manifoldly combined by Him into one:—As it begins in the rejection of My person, so *will it continue to be* with My kingdom upon earth, in which I continue to live and conquer; always new *offence* on the part of those who reject to their own hurt, but at last a certain and complete *judgment* upon all who are obstinate in resisting. For *this stone* is, as רֹאשׁ פִּנָּה, at once the under foundation and upper cope-stone of the building, whoever (of Jews or Gentiles) henceforth stumbles on the firmly

Hosted by Google

laid foundation, and falls upon it as a stone of offence,[1] he *shall* indeed *fall* and be broken, instead of being built and established upon it; but he upon whom the full weight of this foundation of God, which also remains as the one key-stone (2 Tim. ii. 19), falls, shall be crushed, broken, and shivered to pieces. First, then, there is the self-condemnation through unbelief in the Saviour in His low estate (who in His kingdom of the cross is still the crucified and rejected One before the world); afterwards the judgment of God through the victorious might of the exalted One, in His perfected kingdom. The first *breaking* is still of a warning and salutary kind; for he who falls upon the stone may yet become wise, so as in repentance and faith to set himself up on the same stone on which he fell. The *grinding into powder* is irretrievable ruin. "In the first punishment the corner-stone appears at rest, and, as it were, passive; in the second, it is active and in motion. The corner-stone at rest is Jesus as He now reveals Himself to us in the Word and Gospel, where He does not judge, but waits for all to come to repentance. The corner-stone grinding the wicked offenders to powder is Jesus as He will reveal Himself in the judgment of the world, in His power and glory."[2] Take heed thou who hearest and readest this! Art thou called a Christian, then the rejected corner-stone lies everywhere in thy way, and thou must either in faith build upon it, or in unbelief fall upon it. But woe to thee, if it should ever fall on thy hostile head!

[1] Artificial, and contrary to the fundamental idea in Isaiah and St Peter, is the sense in which some have understood it, viz.:—Whosoever would *move it away* as it were—with the whole force of his bent body—so that *fall upon it* would be here the Hebr. נפל, equivalent to *set upon it* with hostile intent, to attack it. (Roos.)

[2] Schmieder Zeugniss von Christo in Predigten p. 252.

Hosted by Google

THE MARRIAGE OF THE KING'S SON.

Matthew xxii. 2–14.

This is a more expanded repetition of a parable spoken already at an earlier period (at an entertainment on a Sabbath day in the house of a Pharisee, Luke xiv. 16–24), and one of the most striking examples of the fact, that the wisdom and love of Christ condescended to such repetitions.[1] The connection in which these two kindred parables occur is, in both cases, one of a very exact kind, such as proves itself historical: in St Luke the whole is a manifestly progressive development, from ver. 7 onwards; while St Matthew here by the πάλιν ἐν παραβολαῖς (ver. 1), and the formula of continuation (ver. 15), closely connects this parable with these last sayings of Christ to the enemies, which are all to be conceived of as more or less public. In St Luke, as before (ver. 7–14), the pride of the guests and the self-interest of the host is humbled and rebuked; and now, in the parable that follows, He proceeds to check the false claim to a participation in the supper of the kingdom of heaven (ver. 15), artlessly interposed by one who seemed to think that the matter was settled by an edifying exclamation! In answer to this the Lord says: "Ye are not yet sure of this! Ye are invited indeed to this supper, but unless ye come in the right way, by renouncing the world, ye shall not taste of the supper, but others shall do so in your stead!" This is in that passage of St Luke the simple principal point of view; and, only after the introduction of the "publicans and sinners" in the place of the Pharisees (ver. 21), does Christ, in a short word, ver. 23, prophetically anticipate the calling of the Gentiles, while He immediately breaks off again at verse 24, and returns to the beginning and the occasion of His discourse. Here, on the contrary, it is the main design further to announce and confirm

[1] As here Schleiermacher admits that Christ has "worked up" a former parable.

Hosted by Google

the *transference of the kingdom of God to the Gentiles*, mentioned at chap. xxi. 42, 43; and, viewing this generally in its historical progress, to show *after* the former parable *what will then further take place*, when the *Son* nevertheless receives and retains *the kingdom*. From this will appear the pervading points of difference between the two parables. In St Luke it is as yet with general indefiniteness only the great supper of a man; in St Matthew it is the marriage or inauguration feast of the king's son. There it is only one servant who calls, and who represents the general idea of invitation; here there are servants repeatedly sent, as in the foregoing parable. There the guests merely excuse themselves and stay away; here (with a brief allusion to what was there said, ver. 5) they again maltreat and murder the servants. There it is the poor and the infirm in the city, and then all that are without, who are called in place of those first invited; here the invitation goes forth at once to all the world. There the abrupt conclusion is that those who were invited shall not taste the supper; here there is a sentence of punishment upon the murderers and their city. There the house is filled with the new guests; here the view extends further so as to show how, even among those who are called, there are many who will not be chosen.

Ver. 2. The *Householder* of the preceding parable appears now as *King;* and this of itself marks an advance and transition to the New Testament period which the commentators, in tracing the connection of these two parables, have, for the most part, mistaken. For, although the *kingdom* of God, the Theocracy, was already with the Jews, it was yet only in a preparatory and typical form over the one family, and the setting up of the great Kingdom took place, properly speaking, only in the Messiah, when He came: The βασιλεία τοῦ θεοῦ was, at the same time, nay predominantly, matter of *prophecy* and *expectation*. Now, however, the rejected stone becomes, notwithstanding, the corner-stone; the Son who was slain lives and ascends the throne. For *this* accession to the government, this inauguration solemnity is certainly meant by the ποιεῖν γάμους. Γάμοι (as nuptiae = γάμος, afterwards ver. 8) often, indeed, in other places, signifies simply (like the German *Hochzeit*, originally a *hohe Zeit*) a feast or banquet in general, as Luke

Hosted by Google

xiv. 8; and regard is had to this signification in the τὸ ἄριστόν μου ver. 4. The Sept. puts γάμος for מִשְׁתֶּה Gen. xxix. 22, and Esth. i. 5, comp. δοχή Esth. i. 3; but, at Esth. ii. 18, the rendering of the same מִשְׁתֶּה by τοὺς γάμους Ἐσθήρ is intended to denote more definitely the marriage-feast of her who was raised to the rank of queen. *Here* at least, in the parable of Christ, it is quite as wrong to adhere exclusively to the idea of the *feast* (the Syr. משתותא) as it is to develop the strict idea of the marriage or nuptials, after the manner of many commentators and preachers, often with an excess of improper trifling. The marriage of the *King's Son*, solemnised by a feast of joy, is His accession to the throne, since, according to oriental and Old Testament conceptions, the people are united with their ruler as by marriage. The King, and the King's Son to whom the kingdom is given, are the same of whom Ps. lxxii. 1, and Ps. ii. prophesy; His marriage is to be understood from Ps. xlv., where also the people who are brought to Him are represented as the bride, comp. 1 Chron. xxix. 22. Still, on the other hand (as more recent commentators in avoiding one mistake have fallen into the other), the figure of the marriage is not entirely to be put aside, as a mere figure for the inauguration; it retains at the same time its truth, as indeed Christ in other places frequently speaks of marriage, and even the Baptist spoke of the Bridegroom and the bride. For something must correspond to this figure, and where would be the *bride*, if she were not the invited guests and subjects themselves? Only, indeed—and this is of importance in opposition to the improper conceits in which many indulge here!—no single guest by himself is called the bride or a bride, so that it might be proper to speak of brides; but the people as a whole, the Church, is the bride of Christ, and every guest so, in a certain sense, really only as an invited guest, and one who takes part in the marriage.[1] This great marriage, with all its preparation, extends through a long period, from the coming and presentation of the Bridegroom down to the last marriage-feast properly so called; from the beginning of the kingdom to its consummation. Hence

[1] Precisely for this reason it would not be proper in *this* parable to speak expressly of the bride—"for a bride is not called, but chosen." (Roos.)

Hosted by Google

afterwards Matt. xxv. 1–12 represents the end as the proper marriage (as Rev. xix. 6, 7), and here also, at the close of the parable, the coming of the King to His guests stretches thus far forward.[1]

Ver. 3, 4. The view which we have taken of the beginning of this parable,—in so far as, further prophesying, it connects itself with the conclusion of the preceding one and continues the history of the rejected Son,—shows the impropriety of the interpretation generally adopted, according to which the *servants* here are again the Old Testament prophets. Olshausen understands *both* sendings thus; Grotius finds, at least in the second, the Apostles and Evangelists; but even the first servants invite to a marriage already prepared, and an inauguration of the *King's Son* just about to begin. This Son, who, in the former parable, was as yet Himself only a *servant* who invited others, —the last and greatest prophet,—is now the exalted *Lord*, to whose presence the servants with kindness and long-suffering invite those to whom they are sent. Did not this take place in the Apostle's sermon concerning the Crucified One to His crucifiers, as chap. xxiii. 34 presently foretells? Observe the important difference between the two parables! Formerly fruits were *demanded;* now an *invitation is given* to the supper. There was also an invitation to come in faith, a holding forth of promised grace, contained as a New Testament in the bosom of the Old, together with the demand for righteousness, *i.e.*, sincere and earnest penitence in reference to the law;—but *this* is not meant by Christ in His second parable, in which He advances further. For here, as at chap. xxiii. 34, all that He

[1] The distinction made by some, recently also by Meyer, between ἄριστον and δεῖπνον, the morning meal and the coena properly so called, seems artificial. For, although certainly the δεῖπνον, Luke xiv., plainly points forward to the future "eating of bread in the kingdom of God" (ver. 24, γεύσεται), yet the ἄριστον also in Matt. ver. 4, comprehends the entire meal with the final perfect enjoyment, even on to the decision of the judgment, and *afterwards;* for when the unworthy are cast out, then properly the supper begins. We are certainly not to understand festivities of the same day following each other (at the beginning, and as a foretaste, the morning meal, then the principal entertainment!). Christ Himself contradicts such a distinction of the words used by Him, when at Luke xiv. 12, 13, He speaks of ἄριστον ἢ δεῖπνον as a δοχή in general.

Hosted by Google

means to say is:—God will begin again to preach to you after My exaltation, but ye will do to *My* prophets and messengers precisely as ye did to those that went before, and to Myself! In the expression καλέσαι τοὺς κεκλημένους at the very outset, the entire Old Testament, with all the calls that had been addressed to the Jews as the pre-elected guests of the kingdom of God, is *presupposed;* comp. Luke xiv. 16, 17, where, after a first ἐκάλεσε, there follows *at the hour of the supper* the same εἰπεῖν τοῖς κεκλημένοις. The custom at that time, and yet prevalent in eastern countries (in the West existing here and there as a popular custom), of inviting twice,—first as it were nominating the guests, and then calling them again to the feast when it is ready,[1]—affords a simple and suitable figure for the relation between the Old and New Testament invitation addressed to Israel.[2] The first gracious covenant word, viz., "Ye are My people, the called of the present and future kingdom!" they had complacently received, and they imagined themselves to be *the guests* who could not fail to sit down at the table with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But the *coming*, the true coming according to God's method of salvation—they failed in that! This was already evident from the preparatory demand of the prophets for the true readiness; and it is now at last fully evident when, after God has made all things ready, they obstinately persevere in not willing and not coming. It is clear, then, that the guests here marked out beforehand are the Jews collectively, as vers. 7–9 also proves; on the other hand, in Luke xiv., the idea of certain persons invited before others is that which is more prominent, so that there, at ver. 21, the publicans and sinners stand opposed to the Scribes and Pharisees, who, according to their own opinion, were, without more ado, entitled to the resurrection of the just.—But why is there here also in the New Testa-

[1] In particular this was a custom among the upper classes at Jerusalem. Sepp cites Echa rabbathi 4, 2: Quaenam fuit gloria Hierosolymitanorum? Nemo eorum venit ad convivium, nisi bis vocatus.

[2] Not in accordance with the text therefore is the idea, otherwise true, which some find here: According to eternal love and election those called were already held as guests before the calling. Or again: "I have prepared a marriage-feast; a marriage-feast needs *guests*, call 'the guests' hither, for whom I have prepared it."

Hosted by Google

ment sending, as in the foregoing parable, a twofold call, a πάλιν ἄλλους δούλους? This cannot be without its significance here, any more than there. We think the first servants in this parable are John the Baptist, with his call to come to the Messiah and Bridegroom; and *joined with him* the *Twelve* and *Seventy*, who continued his preaching concerning the kingdom of heaven being at hand, in their first mission to the cities of Israel. This is the interpretation lately given by Helferich;[1] and, in fact, we should have felt some surprise had the Saviour nowhere expressed a special condemnation of the unbelief in this first and evangelical preaching of His forerunner, and of those whom He sent before Himself. He does this here, and at this point the two parables, which are connected by the link of continuation, run into each other; as was actually the case in the *transition* from the Old to the New Testament. The former parable has represented the Baptist, and even the Son Himself, as the finishers of the Old Testament message, which *required* something of those to whom it was addressed, and this was the one side of the truth; to supplement it, however, the other side must now follow, according to which the Baptist, and the Apostles and Evangelists who were analogous to him in their first mission, invite to the kingdom which has just begun, to the marriage which is just about to be celebrated. (Christ's own call, "Come unto Me!" remains here properly in the background, as the plan of the parable requires. In Luke, chap. 14, on the other hand, the one servant was actually the Son in disguise; His invitation, with its result, however, was certainly also that which is there represented—consequently the same as Matt. ver. 5.) This interpretation is not confuted, bnt rather confirmed, when we see how the first invitation is called only a καλέσαι εἰς τοὺς γάμους; on the contrary, at the *second*, properly the apostolic invitation, not only is the hour of the banquet near at hand, but now *all things* are, properly speaking, *ready*. But that this last preparation of the feast consists in the atoning, sacrificial death of Him who was slain—this mysterious and

[1] Namely, F. J. M. Helferich in Dolgesheim. See his original Sermons (Frankfort 1841), which, in spite of their many faults, we yet strongly recommend on account of their fresh life, and their quaint originality.

Hosted by Google

innermost truth, Christ, of course, as yet conceals, and has only hinted at it in the preceding parable.

The first result, *They would not* come! by no means denotes a first stage of rejecting unbelief, the "lowest degree" as exemplified in the indifferent who have only no inclination to come and nothing further;—as most preachers say, and even Draeseke in his excellent three sermons on this parable. But it is the disclosure, as yet in a general style, of the state of things which the unbelieving resistance of the people, from their fathers downwards, had brought about, such as must become manifest in the days of Jesus the Son of man; it is the same which, after having led them ever nearer to it, He leaves with them at last, Matt. xxiii. 37, but which He had also frequently said to them since John v. 40. They would not, *i. e.*, simply, they *did not come*, and that through the fault of their own not willing; because the promised kingdom pleased them indeed, but not the divinely appointed way of coming into it, because they desired a Messiah, but not the actual Messiah as He now appears to them. Afterwards, vers. 5, 6, this οὐκ ἤθελον is by no means intensified; but the persons spoken of are now first more exactly distinguished according to the two classes of the merely negatively indifferent, and the positively hostile.

The guests, who had already made their unwillingness so manifest, continue nevertheless, in the eye of God's long-suffering, to be, and are again called, *the guests;* and as if He cannot suppose or give credit to so horrible a thing, He sends the Apostles in a last season of grace before the judgment to say,—Will men then show such contempt to their God and Lord, as they would be ashamed of were it done to a man; namely, that he should have prepared a banquet, and that the *guests* should not come to it? Therefore, "*Tell* them which are bidden; tell them once more in true and faithful words; perhaps all that has gone before has not been rightly done, or not rightly heard and considered, perhaps the poor people may yet bethink themselves, may yet become willing and come." O, how love constrains the King to dispose of His banquet, to win and keep His rebellious subjects! All former unwillingness is to be forgiven, a new Behold! displays the gifts of grace, prepared through the atonement of Christ, in all their entire sufficiency and glory. All

Hosted by Google

that is needed is to *come*, and that every one should bring nothing with him but his poverty and sin, only even yet to kiss and to acknowledge the King's Son; *all things* are yet open, now (Luke xiv. 17, ἤδη) for the first time all things are perfectly *ready*. This now is certainly the apostolic, and no longer the prophetic invitation. The carrying out of the metaphor of a banquet by the slaughter of oxen and fatlings, points back to Prov. ix. 2, 3, as our Lord ever delights in throwing the light of fulfilment upon Old Testament words:—τεθυμένα, however, does not necessarily indicate a sacrificial meal; for θύειν has the same signification with σφάζειν, as, in the New Testament, John x. 10 proves, and Prov. ix. 2, LXX. ἔσφαξε τὰ ἑαυτῆς θύματα for טִבְחָה טִבְחָהּ. When God furnishes and prepares for His only begotten Son the feast of the kingdom, the pleasure and honour of bestowing salvation upon sinners, what a fulness of glory must there be in the enjoyment of it! But those who will not have the Son do not come, and if they remain in this state of mind they must certainly be judged as obstinate *rebels*. The grace of God in Christ is a grace which overtakes the sinner, which is all-sufficient, which repeatedly invites and *urges*, but it does not *compel;* for those who resist it there remains the condemnation, *Ye* would not, although *I* would with all earnestness and long-suffering zeal!

Vers. 5, 6. The ἀμελήσαντες,—which is a milder expression than to *make light of* or scorn,—are those indifferent ones who are sunk in earthliness, and to whom "the remnant" stand opposed as making a hostile resistance. Already have the first class of guests their *own* farm and merchandise, which stand opposed to the "*my* supper" in the invitation immediately before; indicating the sinful cleaving to the things of the world that characterises them, and consequently the root and germ of the same feeling of pride in which afterwards the false guest despises the wedding-garment of the king. "I myself have my garment; I make ready my own feast; I have even to celebrate my own wedding"—for Christ here briefly calls to mind the excuses of Luke xiv. 18–20. (I *must* go elsewhere, I *go* elsewhere, I *can* not, *i.e.*, I *will* not come.) The one has already his property and land; the other is still eager on making gain by his trade and merchandise. Tell those who are thus indifferent to the

Hosted by Google

call of God, that all which they call their own profits them nothing, and as a vain thing cannot save them; follow them upon their earthly ways with this testimony, and with the intreaty that they will accept the gracious gifts of the King,—and they will in the end show themselves to be also positively hostile, and all the more angry and insolent the more kindly that grace has been offered to them.[1]

Ver. 7. That which, in the figure of the ἄνθρωπος βασιλεύς, is an exhaustion of long patience and a sudden outbreak of just anger, is in the Lord God one and the same with His holy love; nay, the burning anger itself testifies to the fervent love of the all-sufficient Creator towards the creature who obstinately refuses all His grace and goodness.[2] If thou wilt see a most special testimony to the true *wrath* of God, which broke forth after the times of long-suffering, and in due time, then look at the destruction of Jerusalem,[3] and see how the wrath of God is come upon these Jews εἰς τέλος (1 Thes. ii. 16), *i.e.*, עַד־כָּלָה, ἕως τέλους Dan. ix. 26, 27. The Lord refers precisely to this prophecy of Daniel, in which He already properly breaks through the parable with the prophetically present explanation. As at chap. xxiv. 15, He mentions the abomination of desolation, so now He says, πέμψας τὰ στρατεύματα αὐτοῦ, "He sent forth His armies," which corresponds to the עַם נָגִיד הַבָּא of Daniel. We, therefore (in opposition to Hengstenberg's and Havernick's not unanswerable reasons), abide by Luther's rendering: And a

[1] Does the Gospel, then, throw people thus into anger? Yes, if a man wants to be angry with another, nothing may irritate him more than to seek to overcome and gain him with love. It is even more tolerable to people to be reproved on the score of all the ten commandments. They perceive well *what they must rid themselves of* if they are to make earnest work of this call. (C. H. Rieger.)

[2] If I were to give one an invitation, out of mere civility, to dine with me, while I was not in earnest, I should not be angry if he refused. And, O man, if thy God merely spake a word of courtesy, if it did not proceed *from the deepest depths of His heart* when He thus calls thee to blessedness, He would then certainly not be so angry at thee for despising His supper. (G. K. Rieger.)

[3] Of which the burning city here is not merely "a dark hint" (as Lange thinks). For the rest it is not denied, that this first and foremost type repeats itself in destructions and judgments of all kinds until the final burning of the world.

Hosted by Google

people of the Prince—the מָשִׁיחַ נָגִיד—(if not, *shall come*, or be sent by Him, yet) who *comes* to judgment through the people sent by Him. Just when the *Messiah the Prince* appears as the *Messiah* cut off, He comes again as the *Prince* to destroy the city and the sanctuary. The Romans, as hostile hosts, serve the judging Lord and God of Israel, at the same time, as angels of judgment;[1] it is these alone (with their eagles, Matt. xxiv. 28, comp. Luke xix. 43), and not higher hosts of God or angels, that we are in the first place to understand as meant here. *Their* city, no longer the city of the king: this is said by way of rejecting them, as afterwards (chap. xxiii. 38), *your* house!

Ver. 8–10. But now, that grace which will not have the feast made ready in vain begins anew to call other guests and subjects to the most gracious King. O how tenderly, and with what gracious sorrow, does the angry King immediately say, The guests were *not worthy*—as if sinners would have been worthy and deserving had they accepted the first invitation! This is His strongest expression of anger and complaint; He "chides them on the score of honour" because they have robbed Him of the prerogative of being gracious to them and bestowing salvation upon them. I wished to bestow upon them honour as My invited guests, but this had no value for them! See the fulfilment Acts xiii. 46, and compare the earlier expression Matt. x. 13. The servants also who were killed still live; they arise ever anew, for the great King can furnish for Himself, even out of His few faithful ones, servants enough for continued sendings. And now first is fully introduced the great and wide Kingdom; the new mission goes forth εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἅπαντα (Mark xvi. 15), beyond the city, and the circle of those first invited, far off to the ways of the Gentiles. Comp. Luke xiv. 21, 23. This we take to be the right sense of the διεξόδους τῶν ὁδῶν, which occurs only here in the New Testament. Others understand it of cross-ways, as being special places of concourse; but it appears to us more simply suitable to understand it of the roads, *going out* in all directions from and beyond that which had been hitherto the circle of invitation. (In Ez. xlviii. 30, תּוֹצָאוֹת הָעִיר is by Aquila, Symmach. and Theodot. rendered by διέξοδοι.)

[1] Only this is meant here, not any hint already at the circumstance that now the Gentiles are called to the service of Christ.

Hosted by Google

Good and bad we understand simply from the foregoing, Whomsoever ye find, whomsoever they found;—therefore equivalent to "without distinction and respect of persons," invite *all* who will come. This is not already "a going beyond the parable to the application" (v. Gerlach), if it is only suitably understood and explained. Although Pfenninger, with apparent point, observes that both words are always used of men only in a *moral* sense, yet it would be a very unsuitable anticipation to define the *good* here already in the invitation. For it is not as *good* that they are all invited; and those who are at last the ἐκλεκτοί have first become so as κλητοί (by the garment they have received). So, in chap. xiii. 48 (which is wrongly cited as parallel to the present), the good and bad do not discover themselves till the separation; before this only ἐκ παντὸς γένους, ver. 47, was said. By a proverbial expression, therefore, good and bad are sinners and the *so-called* righteous, the godless and the respectable together:—this, indeed, is a *moral* sense which may be represented in the parable by eminent and obscure, respectable and vulgar, etc. If we look back to chap. xxi. 31, it will be evident that we must seek the guest who is detected as having despised the wedding-garment, only among the "good."—Thus the wedding-chamber (for which ὁ γάμος itself is significantly put, for the principal idea is that of the prepared joys and pleasures) does not remain empty; but has become full of ἀνακειμένους, of guests actually come and waiting for the banquet. All these enjoy already somewhat of the royal favour and honour, the gathering meanwhile goes on until all are assembled, there is yet room for every one who has sat down; this is the wide intermediate period in which Christendom, called from among the heathen, now stands. At last, however, *the king* himself appears, of course with, and in his son, on whose account the feast is made, and the festivities are now to begin. And now the king must again discriminate, for unworthy guests may not stand before his presence:—whether it be that from the first they would not come; or that they have come in a wrong way, having hypocritically intruded themselves into the company, while in heart they are proud despisers.

Vers. 11, 12. To the second act of the parable, which is now added, corresponds a similar Jewish proverb of such as venture

Hosted by Google

to enter the palace of the king in a dirty and loathsome state. Our Lord, however, takes His similitude directly from the Scripture, Zeph. i. 8, where, indeed, the מְקֻרָאִים, ver. 7, who are sanctified for the great *sacrifice*, do not correspond to the guests of our parable, but are the executioners of the Lord's anger on the day of judgment; those, however, who are clothed with *strange apparel* (an expression that is singular in the Old Testament, and remarkable), are the same as the unworthy guest here. There it is especially princes and kings' sons who, in their pride, make a display of their own splendour, or, in their apostasy from Jehovah, let themselves be honoured and dressed in purple by strange rulers; while Jehovah will see His own people only in the uniform of His kingdom, decorated only with the favours and honours which He has dealt out. The custom which still exists in the East, and is mentioned from the earliest times in the Old Testament, of presenting festival garments, is well known, Gen. xlv. 22; Jud. xiv. 12; 2 Kings v. 22. These passages contain a sufficient answer to "the objection, that the existence of such a usage in ancient times cannot be proved"—an objection, moreover, which, although it were better grounded, is declared, even by Neander, to be insufficient, inasmuch as we may infer from later customs that similar ones prevailed in the earliest ages. Neander suggests it as a difficulty that Christ did not expressly note this circumstance, and reprimand the guest for his contempt of the offered garment;—but we are of opinion that this is very evidently *presupposed*. That the missed *wedding-garment* can only be such a *caftan*, offered by the rich king to all the guests,—*is self-evident;* for where otherwise could such as were brought in from the streets obtain their worthy garment?[1] As the king clothes his guests, the bridegroom his bride (Ps. xlv. 10), so does God Himself clothe us with the robe of righteousness and the garment of salvation. (Is. lxi. 10.) We may and we must, when He calls, come just *as we are*—but we may not, if we would see *His* face and enjoy His last feast, *remain* as we are. In the way, or rather in the

[1] Lange says very truly:—"This striking feature of the parable would create no difficulty even if there existed no trace of the recorded custom. The poorest man gets his festival garment if he is called as a favourite to the court." Even in the West this custom quite generally obtains.

Hosted by Google

fore-court and ante-room, something takes place beforehand which no one can refuse with impunity, and from which no one can withdraw himself without being found out. This parable, which is designed prophetically to announce the entire counsel and way of God with Jews and Gentiles, becomes complete only when carried out to this decisive point. Olshausen's doubt whether the second part of the parable applies to the Pharisees is easily disposed of. For, in the first place, Christ speaks not merely for them, but for all people and all disciples also in all future time; and then the thought could not but force itself on the conscience of the Pharisees,—Such people as you, with your own honour and righteousness, will yourselves never be tolerated by God in His kingdom!

The king comes to *view* the *guests*, *i.e.* now already ἀνακειμένους, therefore κλητοὺς and not merely κεκλημένους; and this entrance and inspection takes place on account of those confident ones who sit and imagine that they will participate in the feast because they have come! Yes, they have come, but not as loyal subjects;—they sit at the table, but it is as despisers of the grace of the one Lord and host. Scarcely has the king entered when such an one falls under his eye, who is therefore named as a first specimen of the *many*, ver. 14. It was indeed told to him, as to all the rest, that every one must put on the wedding-garment offered to him; but his own dress appeared to him sufficient, and in this he has intruded himself, thinking that he may offer this to the most gracious king. He has not indeed despised the feast, but will enjoy it along with the others; however "he wants to belong to the number of the happy, while he will know nothing of terms or conditions." (Dräseke.) At least of the one principal condition, namely, that he renounce what belongs to self. That which belongs to *self*, however, is before God sin; the wilfully hypocritical pride of goodness is in His sight the worst shame and nakedness. That Christ, by the man who has not the wedding-garment, means in the first place a despiser on *such* grounds is clear, although we may suppose at the same time a further reference to all to whom in any way the wedding-garment is wanting; for the parable is not meant to say *everything*, but only brings forward a principal feature and breaks off. What now is the garment? One might say, The course of life,

Hosted by Google

the works,—if that is understood aright, as it is meant in Rev. xix. 8. But quite as well may we say, with Luther's marginal gloss, This is faith—but faith that is genuine, loving, sanctifying; as Wesley very well expresses it, "the righteousness of Christ, first imputed then implanted." To have put on Christ, as the Apostle says: *If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked* (2 Cor. v. 3)—this is, and must ever be, however, a matter of the inner man; in the last instance only known to ourselves, and manifest to the Judge of hearts. Therefore we do not find here the servants exercising this discrimination; they merely offered the garments according to their commission, and turned away from the door such as were evidently for coming in beggar's rags without any change of raiment; many others, however, passed before them in the crowd whom they could not discern. The King's eyes of flame see differently, and as He sees the unworthy guest, so He judges him. The still half friendly ἑταῖρε, just as at chap. xx. 13, is certainly not meant either here or there in a bitter and derisive sense (see chap. xxvi. 50). Even in the mouth of the Judge there is still the condescending, convicting question; and a sufficient answer and excuse would still be accepted, if such were possible. "*How* camest thou in hither, how hast thou dared even to enter, not to speak of sitting down, *without having* a wedding-garment? Thou knowest well that this was prepared for thee according to the right and favour of this feast, and that thou hast despised it."[1] This is the sin which alone is judged; not the first sin with which we come, but the not receiving of the grace that covers and cancels it.

Vers. 13, 14. The διάκονοι, different from the foregoing δούλοις, are here the angels, as in chap. xiii. 39, 49. The man bound by these strong ones can make no resistance; just as when struck dumb before the countenance and word of the King he could not justify himself. The outer darkness, with the weeping and gnashing of teeth, was already spoken of, chap. viii. 12; it recurs again at chap. xxv. 30 (xxiv. 51). Thus far the king in the parable; the concluding saying is added by the Lord Jesus in His own person, taking the place

[1] The negation μὴ ἔχων indicates this knowledge, as Winer rightly observes in his Grammar.

Hosted by Google

of this king;[1] just as in Luke xiv. 24 He Himself spake the concluding word. We are already acquainted with this saying concerning the few who are chosen; as in chap. xx. 16, addressed to the disciples, and here to the Pharisees in the presence of all the people. After this parable there is no need for a word being said against the *gratia irresistibilis* of an absolute decree, which is only put by violence into the words. In like manner the πολλοὶ κλητοί or κεκλημένοι are certainly in the first place only in antithesis to the ὀλίγοι; and what is meant to be said is, It will happen to many as to this one here described! That our Lord, according to the original decree and its final execution, calls *all*, is also in the parable at least provided for in the wide commission,—Call *whomsoever ye meet!* Say to no one, Thou art not meant and invited! but if any one asks, I also? let your answer be, Yes, certainly all, all, whosoever will come! But as the Gospel is preached gradually to all in *due time* (1 Tim. ii. 6), as the calling of many is not manifest on earth, we cannot therefore speak *historically* of a calling of all. *This*, at all events—with the reserve which the Scripture generally maintains regarding the state of those who are not called upon earth—the πολλοί here might indicate; for the narrative of the prophetic parable hardly reaches to the last end of the ways of God—the general and last judgment properly speaking.

CHRIST'S ANSWER RESPECTING THE TRIBUTE TO CÆSAR.

(Matt. xxii. 18–21; Mark xii. 15–17; Luke xx. 23–25.)

The preceding formally official question of the unbelieving Jews, with which after three years full of rejected testimonies and signs they would begin anew, had issued ill for those who put it; the Respondent had shamed *them*, arrested and caught them in their own words and in their own judgment. Notwithstanding, part of them, here called the *Pharisees*, acting always with the same unity of compact and determined resistance, lay a plot, in the incorrigible folly of their evil hearts, for entrapping *Him* by words which they would craftily tempt Him to utter! He has not yet said enough to them; they are bent upon bringing

[1] Thus we see that the *King* (ver. 11) is the Son who ascends the throne, whose oneness with the Father is thus indicated.

Hosted by Google

yet greater shame upon themselves. Such questioning in order to entangle and take Him in an answer had indeed been an accustomed device of theirs (Luke xi. 53, 54). But now, in these last days, the evil one especially tempts them to this scheme; not knowing that all the yet remaining testimony for the truth was only thus to be obtained for the world from the mouth of Christ. What is said in Ps. xli. 6–10 must go on fulfilling itself.

On this occasion, it is properly speaking the *Pharisaic* party, as such, which in a formally deliberative assembly, *συμβούλιον*, contrives the new artifice. The rulers keep themselves for all issues wisely in the background, they only send *their disciples* as *ἐγκαθέτους* or suborned listeners; these, however, are in cunningly-contrived fellowship with the people (in other respects hated by them) belonging to the party of *Herod*, who had just come to the feast at Jerusalem. (Of these Herodians we have already spoken, Matt. xvi. 6.) Ecclesiastics and politicians, orthodox and liberals, pietists and free-thinkers—all who, in ordinary circumstances, go separate ways, are here found in friendly combination against Christ. The knaves address the *Master* (the Pharisees, of course, being spokesmen, for *this* they will not allow to be taken from them), as if they would *learn* from Him, and as if they would submit themselves to an utterance of His authority. The second word is again their "*we know*"—not indeed "that thou art come from God, the Messiah"—but "that thou art *true*, and teachest the way of God *in truth*."[1] Twice do these hypocrites and liars compel themselves to take into their mouths without shame the word which judges them; but this only aggravated their wicked falsehood, just as the devil speaks the worst lies even when he utters truth. "Thou judgest not according to men; and accommodatest thyself to no man," —as they indeed had often enough experienced! "When it concerns teaching the way of *God*, thou regardest not the person of *men*"—all this taken together is indeed the highest praise of a *teacher*, perfectly applicable only to the *faithful Witness* (Rev. i. 5). And it is here accorded to Him by His enemies, who lie when they speak the truth, and who, on the other hand, must

[1] In St Luke it is somewhat of a circumlocution: *ὅτι ὀρθῶς λέγεις καὶ διδάσκεις*, *i. e.*, Thou speakest privately and in particular every word, and publicly and in general all thy teaching,—according to truth.

Hosted by Google

needs speak the truth when they think they lie. The wretches think they can cozen Christ with praise as if He were one of themselves; they imagine thus to be able to gain His confidence—as if He stood in this relation to them! As if He—seeing that the truth is in Him—must not also know what is in false man! As if He would give His confidence to *these* men whom He has so long known, when they now all at once strike this new note! No poet could portray united falsehood and folly with more psychological depth and striking effect, than these miserable men depict them in themselves, by a word or two from their own lips, in the simple narrative of the Evangelists.

And now what will they learn from Him; what is the question which follows this fine preface? It is in truth, in the then existing circumstances, a very puzzling question respecting the giving of tribute to the Roman emperor. "*Tell* us now, with thy well-known frankness, which we doubt not thou wilt show on this occasion also, here in the temple before all the people—tell us ὀρθῶς and ἐπ' ἀληθείας, *What thinkest thou*, what is thy doctrine on this point? Thou carest nothing for Cæsar; and nothing for these *Herodians*, if thou knowest them. Thou knowest that we Pharisees are not at one with them on this subject—judge now between us a true judgment. It is with us an important matter of conscience whether it be *lawful* or not; nay, rather, it appears to us Pharisees actually a sin to give tribute to Cæsar, to pay poll-tax,[1] seeing that we already give our δίδραχμα to the temple of God, and that the people of Jehovah ought to be subjected to no heathen government."[2] After the first question, ἔξεστι δοῦναι ἢ οὔ, in which the case is proposed, there follows in St Mark the urgent repetition of the question, δῶμεν ἢ μὴ δῶμεν; "We want a clear and categorical answer, Yes or No! to this 'burning question' about *paying* and *giving*, which is of so much consequence to all the people." With such ludicrous boldness do they expose themselves to the Holy One, who has already so often judged them and put them to flight; in the vain imagination that He cannot escape from

[1] In Luke φόρος, which, as distinguished from τέλος, indicates always personal taxes.

[2] Against the Idumean Herod the entire Sanhedrim, appealing to the passage Deut. xvii. 15, had declared their protest.

Hosted by Google

this cunningly-twisted snare. Displease *one* party He certainly must, they think. For, should He say *No* (which was the answer they expected, and wished for), then the *Herodians*, who were favourably disposed to the dominion of the Romans, would be witnesses to the accusation against Him; while the Pharisees would be ready, as "impartial, honest" people, to be joint witnesses with them in such a case; and the cry would go forth, He has decided that we should not *give* (comp. Luke xx. 20 with xxiii. 2). Should He say, Yes—then He would compromise Himself with the people, who were expecting emancipation from the yoke of Rome. And if He should not answer at all, that would not equally serve their end. This is their plot, and they fail because their wickedness has blinded them.

Vers. 18, 19. They do not need to wait, their answer comes immediately, but very contrary to what they expected. With one glance, and in majestic calmness, He tears in pieces their net, repels with becoming dignity the flattery of their lips; while He accepts the truth that lay in their words, and gives them forthwith to their face the desired proof of the fact that He truly speaks without regarding the person of men. "Why *tempt* ye Me, ye *hypocrites?* Ye represent yourselves as tenderly conscientious people (Luke δίκαιοι), and yet hide beneath this pretence the most perfect malice!" This first word, accompanied with the majestic glance of holy judicial anger, would have been quite sufficient to send them away speechless. But the Lord will not merely triumph over these enemies by such a direct demonstration of power; He will condescendingly *teach* them to the last, even when it is malice that bids Him; He will yet obediently do the will of Him who sent Him to testify for the truth (John xviii. 37). Thus does His victory become a manifold and complete one; thus does His love beat down their malice, His humility their impudence, His wisdom their folly; thus does He bless His enemies with a salutary rebuke, if they would only receive it, and utter a great and most momentous word for Israel and for the whole world. That word He will utter in a thoroughly convictive and memorable way, placing it in concrete connection with something palpable, so that it may be no mere word. He will damp the warm and passionate eagerness of His interrogators—as was becoming to

Hosted by Google

Himself, and beneficial to them,—before the utterance that requires hearing ears comes from His mouth. He will, finally, make the tempters themselves, taken in their own snare, produce the symbolical and real decision of their own question! Thus does He, in one moment of simple wisdom, discover more reflection than they have done by their long deliberation. "*Show* or *bring* Me the coin with which ye (in spite of your scruples) pay the tribute!"—St Mark and St Luke say at once δηνάριον, which is the same thing. The former makes Christ use the word φέρετε, because they would actually have first to fetch and produce a Roman denarius; which Christ indeed foresaw, but yet in His *word* will not presuppose (as this would somewhat impair its dignity).[1] Meanwhile the expectation of the people is on the stretch; there is a solemn stillness which admonishes all who can and will give heed, to open their ears and their hearts.

Vers. 20, 21. And He does *not* yet answer with the first word, does not say Yes or No, as they had asked of Him; but puts another question in return,—What money is this? *Whose is this image and superscription?* We see how He catechises the hypocrites again, as simply as in that other place (chap. xxi. 31). They shall and they must continue to testify against themselves; and by the extorted answer, "*Cæsar's*," lay the ground upon which He suddenly takes His stand with the judicial word which, without Yes or No, more than sufficiently settles the whole question: *Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's.*

If there be any one who feels, or will acknowledge, no fulness and depth of meaning in this wondrous word of Christ—we pity his feeling, his understanding, or his exegetical caprice. When Dr Justus Jonas calls this Gospel (the 23d of Trinity) "the troublesome Gospel which has bitten so many preachers"—we can understand this only of a pitiful anxiety on the part of poor preachers to find a definite and sharply pointed *sensus simplex* in the pregnant words for a short and plain sermon.

[1] Bengel infers from what St Mark further adds: ἵνα ἴδω—*that I may see it*—that Christ till this time had never had such money before His eyes; but this seems far-fetched and open to easy confutation. The expression simply means:—We will see how the matter stands; give Me the *corpus delicti* that I may examine and give judgment upon it.

Hosted by Google

But when the *Wandsbecker Bote* says,—"*Andrew*,[1] what a fulness of meaning in all that comes from his mouth! It reminds me of those boxes, in which every one is found to inclose another"—we heartily agree with the observation. But we shall not be satisfied with merely remarking this; we shall venture to open the boxes one after the other, and to look into them; in other words, to consider and develop the fulness of the meaning in due order.

The first and most direct sense, then, in answer to the question (seeing that the imperial coin had been shown, and that this was what was spoken of), is certainly, *Render to every one his tribute!* This connects itself immediately with the proof given by their hand into Christ's hand that they have *two kinds of coin;* the Roman, with Cæsar's image and title, and the holy Temple-money with another stamp. This proves two things: the right of Cæsar to his money; and the freedom of the temple and the temple tax, which indeed Cæsar had not yet taken from them. Olshausen speaks from exegetical caprice, which cannot reconcile itself to words being taken typically in many senses, when he boldly affirms that "every reference of the τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ τῷ θεῷ to the temple tax of half a shekel disturbs the point of view of the entire narrative." For if τὰ Καίσαρος means at all events first *the coin*, and then figuratively much more (which, in opposition to the universal preaching on this text in Christendom, he cannot and will not deny), the same must surely hold good of the antithesis in the other member. The jejune Michaelis is also right when he demonstrates this first sense. According to him,[2] there lay in the question something of the casuistical, genuinely Pharisaic scruple: "the *yearly poll-tax* belongs to *God*, who has imposed it upon us in His law, and we have conscientious scruples against *giving to Cæsar what is God's*." But the emperor at that time did not yet require, as Vespasian did afterwards, the half-shekel to be given to the Capitol instead of the Temple. Our Lord first of all indicates this: "*Such* money is not even received in the Temple, it is in fact the coin of the emperor current among you; ye may with good conscience, nay ye ought, to give to each of your two

[1] The above quotation is from a *dialogue* in the works of *Claudius*. Andrew is the name of one of the speakers.

[2] Mosaisches Recht. Part iii. § 173.

Hosted by Google

masters his own tax and coin." A rabbinical rule says, "The coin of the country shows the master,"—*i.e.*, actual subjection follows from the currency of the accepted coin. Accordingly Christ says to them in effect:—Ye do not in other respects despise the emperor's money, ye acknowledge his dominion by your making use of it; if your conscience were so tender, then the difficulty must have occurred to you sooner, and such money should not at all have been used by you.—This, then, is the first meaning, and that which lies most evidently on the surface; but is it, as Michaelis thinks, the sole, the entire meaning, "only more concisely and elegantly expressed," without τὸ νόμισμα? We protest strongly against this, and proceed still further to open the boxes.

A Dr Am Ende preached from these words in the Kreuz-Kirche at Dresden, 1756, before Frederic the Great, and drew from them as his theme the Prussian Motto, *Suum cuique*. Quite justly; for in the τὰ Καίσαρος τὰ τοῦ θεοῦ, with its *widening* circle of meaning, Christ really intends further to say this, and to mark the true distinction between God and Cæsar. He will show that the two services are quite compatible the one with the other, leaving no room for any scruple of conscience; as Solomon, Eccles. viii. 2, has said of the *king* of Israel (which indeed was not quite the same) and the *God* of Israel. The questioners have in a manner set *God* and *men* in opposition to each other; so that the answer, from this point of view, should allow nothing to Cæsar, because his dominion was contrary to the way of God with Israel. It is not, however, so; and our Lord connects together the service of God and men, although in other respects He will know nothing of two masters. What a comprehensively general proposition is this! Even if, as He does not say exactly τὰ τῶν ἀνθρώπων, we should understand no more than all *human ordinance and authority* (1 Pet. ii. 13); for so much our Lord will certainly include in what He says as applicable to all nations,—those also which are not Israel, and whose rulers are not precisely called Cæsar. But of course He *separates* by a just *suum cuique*, even while He *connects:* to give to Cæsar what is God's, or *vice versa*, He will certainly not permit. And how so? This is just what the hypocrites do, even when they suppose they do it not, and Christ rebukes them *for this* first of all. Make the true distinction between

Hosted by Google

the things which pertain to Cæsar and those which pertain to God! Make not the kingdom and government of God over you to consist in outward things, such as paying or refusing a tax; do not confound politics and religion by the unseasonable application of theocratical ideas, seeing that, as ye know, the dealings of God with His Israel have often enough been by foreign dominion. Only we must here guard against a misunderstanding of this saying, which was formerly more frequent than it is now, namely, that what is outward and earthly should be, as it were, thrown over to the state, as being of no importance. Thus our Lord would be made to say: "Ye have enough to do with God, ye who, as true δίκαιοι, would act according to My advice. What matters to you the tax of Cæsar, and other such things? Only *surrender* without concern everything earthly and outward, money and land, body and life, to your king, whoever he may be, how much soever of these he will have, and keep the soul for God!" No! far be it from our Lord thus to degrade government, thus falsely to sever the outward from the inward![1] He teaches quite as decidedly on the other side: "Seek and maintain the *true unity* in your duty and obligation toward God and man! Serve Cæsar for God's sake, who has placed him over you, as once He did Nebuchadnezzar over your fathers." Thus does it harmonise with Jer. xxvii. 6–11, xxix. 7, and Rom. xiii.; 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, as also John xix. 11. To be a dutiful subject of Cæsar, and to be an obedient servant of God, are *quite compatible the one with the other*, so far as, and because, God has given dominion to Cæsar; consequently, to give Cæsar his own for God's sake, means properly, only to obey God. Thus does Christ decide,—in cases of collision arising from hypocrisy, selfwill, or fanaticism,—against all carnal zealots or falsely spiritual Quakers; while it is evident that the very same words decide upon every genuine case of collision in which the obeying of God rather than man must take effect.[2] The second clause, in which He gives the con-

[1] Rud. Matthäi calls the Lord's saying "a command which indeed expresses the subordination of Cæsar to God, but *not* the separation of God from Cæsar."

[2] Mendelssohn (in his Jerusalem), however, was very wrong when he thought, that this utterance of Christ exhibits an evident case of opposition

Hosted by Google

firmation of the first, continues indeed at the same time the *limitation*, expresses the true limits of obedience. This inner connection of the two clauses thus apprehended leads, however, again a step further into the depth of the meaning.

The distribution of the clauses by Wesley is not altogether wrong:—Ye Pharisees render to Cæsar his due! Ye *Herodians* especially render to God His due! This, however, is only the application that lies on the surface, for Christ will certainly say also to the Pharisees, nay to all men, *Give to God what is God's!* If now we consider *this* word first in its own depth of meaning, and bring it into its own analogous relation to the question respecting the *image* and *superscription* in the first parallel clauses, new and important thoughts will result, which, indeed, Christians even from early times have not overlooked. The striking question asked by our Lord respecting the *image* cannot have been without special purpose and significance; it was by no means intended merely to bring out the proof of this particular coin being *Cæsar's*, for we know the manner in which Christ is wont to connect spiritual truths with outward and sensible objects. He who will not go beyond the coin, must also, for example, limit Luke x. 41, 42 to the meat. But there Martha understood better what was the one thing needful; and here the Pharisees are astonished at the way in which Christ, in every answer, baffles and rebukes them.—Therefore, "That which bears *Cæsar's* image is, as belonging to Cæsar, to be given to him; but that which bears *God's image* belongs to God!" At first, indeed, it might appear as if the answer of Christ really said nothing, and as if now the controversy properly begins, as to what *is* God's and what *is* Cæsar's. But why did the hypocrites not proceed to ask this? Because they had still a conscience! The Lord speaks for and to the *conscience*—therefore He can and must be understood! This is, in general, His manner. Here, with all its depth, nothing was simpler or more natural than this sudden advance which He makes; for it is the capital doctrine of Moses, at the very beginning, that *man* was

and collision of duties! No, the counsel which Christ here gives is truly no Pharisaic advice to serve two masters, to halt between two opinions, to carry the tree on both shoulders—as Mendelssohn received for answer from Hamann (Golgotha and Scheblimini in Roth. vii. 63).

Hosted by Google

created after the image of God. The usual dogmatic account of the entire loss of this image, however, is not found precisely either in Moses or elsewhere in the Scripture; but rather the opposite (see Gen. ix. 6; Jam. iii. 9; Acts xvii. 29). The comparison of the entire man to a stamped coin is one which came from the lips of Christ once before, Luke xv. 8, 9 (which will be explained in the next volume). Here, however, He speaks not in the first place of a restoration of the image (as Clemens Strom. 6. 644, *ὁ δίκαιος νόμισμα κυρίου γενόμενος καὶ χάραγμα βασιλικὸν ἀναδεξάμενος*), but of the stamp as being still there, and on account of which the *rendering to God* is required. Cæsar is satisfied with money and goods, obedience and honour rendered in the outward act; but God requires the whole man, the entire heart in every act. Ye men, give yourselves to God!—thus does Christ teach the whole way of God for all in truth. Chiefly, ye *men of Israel* (who, as belonging to God, would refuse yourselves to Cæsar), who, in addition to the image, bear in yourselves a special *superscription*, which holds forth that image and makes it known.[1] They desired that He would show them the way of God; He willingly does so, even in answer to *such* a request, and it is the same way of righteousness which the Baptist had already preached to them. Yet not as if, with Ebrard, we were to take the word too superficially as meaning,—Give *repentance* to God, that is His tribute and due! No, in repentance, in faith, in obedience, give *yourselves* entirely to God. "Thou must give thy money indeed to Cæsar, but thyself to God; for what will remain over for God, if everything belongs to Cæsar?" (Tertullian Idol. c. 15.) Ye belong to yourselves just as little as does the tribute money which is due from you. What a significant answer to these hypocritical zealots, who (to speak again with the *Wandsbecker)* have something to ask regarding the silver image of Cæsar, but nothing about the image of God! Herein, finally, the last idea opens itself up as the innermost *kernel* of the complete, altogether sufficient answer; namely, the explanation *why* this seeming contradiction to their dignity as the people of God is imposed upon them, why what is relatively not right

[1] Although image and superscription may also be understood severally of the feeling of God remaining in every man, *and* the knowledge corresponding thereto, now indeed very indistinct.

Hosted by Google

has come to be right, why Israel should and must pay tribute to the Roman emperor. *If ye had done the second*, then the first would not have been required of you: If ye had given to God what is God's, then ye might have been quite free to serve only this your King! "That ye have two masters is the penalty of your sin." (V. Meyer.) Is not this again the clear doctrine of Moses and the prophets; is it not the way of God with Israel, ever and anon since the period of the Judges, that the departure from Jehovah has been punished by subjection to a foreign power? Here again speaks *Claudius* with surpassing excellence: —"In general, the question as a whole was a very awkward question; and just the same as if an adulterer were to ask whether it is right to pay the penalty affixed to the crime of adultery."—This principle of God, this rebuking demonstration of that principle, stretches back to the setting up of the Israelitish kingdom with Saul, which was originally not according to the will of God. They had even then rejected the Lord their God, that He should not be King over them; God gave them a king in His anger, and made this the occasion of a new display of grace and glory, in the abundant vouchsafement of His gracious guidance under David and Solomon. But this people never accommodated themselves to the way of their God. Already, in the wilderness, when God said, Go up that ye may possess the land! they would not; but when He said, Go not up! then they went and were smitten (Num. xiv. 40–45). When God was their King they rejected Him; when He gave them over to the hands of strangers that they might know what is the service of God and what the service of the kingdoms of the countries (2 Chron. xii. 8)—then they rebelliously resisted, instead of seeking deliverance from the Lord in repentance. In particular, the questioners on this occasion were, properly speaking, people who were inclined to submit to the authority neither of God nor Cæsar; and yet the dominion of Cæsar had been imposed upon them on account of sin, to bring them back from sin to God. Verily this answer of Christ's was truly scriptural, conformable to the law and the prophets, theocratical, orthodox, and to be received without contradiction.[1]

[1] As Lex expresses himself on this point in Otto's Denkschrift des Herborner Seminars for 1849.

Hosted by Google

See, now, in this type immediately referring to Israel, but of general application, how the wise and faithful Master, as Teacher of the whole world, here actually in one or two plain words, which merely take up the matter as it lies *before* Him and lay open its inner significance, gives the true answer to the ever-recurring question of proud, obstinate man, who seeks a false freedom in what is outward: Shall we pay tribute, obey, be subject to, emperors and kings? In this answer everything on every side is duly proportioned, and the inexhaustible text develops itself ever anew and ever richly as an answer, according as the question is put. The *question of right* is turned into a *question of history: How* came we under such dominion?—Again, grasping this still more deeply, it becomes a *question of conscience*, running thus: But *wherefore?*—And an oppressed people must *begin* by answering the last, to which "neither historical nor juridical knowledge is requisite."[1] All revolutionary spirits have here their answer, which teaches them that reform must begin from within and proceed outward to the one thing needful; condemnation is pronounced equally upon so-called passive resistance refusing to pay tribute, and upon active insurrection, from which it in fact does not essentially differ. All who are inclined to a republic (in the period of the new covenant, when the theocracy, plainly shown to be an impracticable attempt so long as sin remains, has given place to the kingdom of Christ) are referred not only to the image upon the coin, but at the same time (which is also implied in this) to the image of God in the earthly majesties, to the necessity that εἷς κοίρανος ἔστω, of there being, in general, one safeguard and security for order and unity in lawful traffic, as every one cannot stamp the coin. All Papists, who, with their church as a self-constituted unwarranted theocracy, would swallow up the state, and all Hegelians, who would let what is called the church be absorbed in the state, receive their answer here respecting the true relation determined by Christ between the two; the same doctrine which the Reformers, and before them the Apostles, taught, according to the mind of Christ, concerning the right and distinction of worldly authority. But all servile Herodians, and flatterers of princes, together with hypocrites before God, receive the admonition to be subject *only* in so far as it is right

[1] See Zeller Monatsbl. 1850.

Hosted by Google

in the sight of God; and for conscience sake to pay to Cæsar also the tribute of testimony to the truth, by reminding him that power has been given to him from above, only for righteousness. In short, "the ultras on all sides are justly repelled by the short answer."[1] Oh that they would not merely let themselves be repelled, as was the case with these tempters: They were astonished, *left Him* (as He had left them, chap. xxi. 17), and *went away!* Here, again, they received the one, first and last word, of the Son who came to seek the fruits: *Give yourselves to God!* But this they will not hear, they will not go this way of God, they will not know and learn this truth; therefore they go away, instead of becoming the honest *disciples* of this *Master.*

ANSWER RESPECTING THE RESURRECTION.

(Matt. xxii. 29–32; Mark xii. 24–27; Luke xx. 34–38.)

The *Sadducees* were certainly not present on this occasion to hear how He had stopped the mouth of the Pharisees; therefore their mouth is still open, as if inviting Him to deal in like manner with themselves. On *the same day;—i.e.*, still in these last days, when all these things happened, and during which no one would be behind in attacking Him,—they brought their question for His discomfiture; and thus drew from Him for the world a great word, the profound answer to all unbelief in the living God of the living. These were those who, with error equally bold and foolish, said that there was no resurrection of the body; and, thence, according to all the ideas entertained among the Jews (and according to the truth of God's word, which does not separate the two), that there was, in general, no immortality, no continued existence of man after death as πνεῦμα; see Acts xxiii. 8.[2] They bring before Him as actual history a curious case, which was at least possible, in order to put their question in the keenest form:—a case which was probably not then for the first time imagined, but which was already a common and

[1] The Friedensbote from Hamburg 1822, p. 68.

[2] This is plainly meant there; not that in general they deny "spirit," in the sense in which the word is now used with us, *i.e.*, "the reality and truth of the spiritual world."

Hosted by Google

hacknied jest against the resurrection, as indeed the like are current enough among the Sadducees of this day. *Moses has said:*—thus they begin their incontrovertible demonstration (although cunningly, scarce suppressing a smile, they afterwards only put a *question*), that Moses, in this as in all his laws, could not possibly have presupposed a "resurrection." Seven brothers had all married one wife successively, without issue: all those who followed married in order to raise up seed to the first; *i.e.*, according to Moses' meaning, to raise up, so to speak, his after-growth out of his grave[1]—beneath which, however, according to the design of the wilful inquirers, there lies a half-restrained sensual sneer at the whole Mosaic ordinance. They all died, however, without effecting their object, for the woman was barren; last of all the woman *died* also, as, indeed, all men die. And now, if with this dying all is not over, as we say, then in the *so-called* "resurrection" (St Mark, ὅταν ἀναστῶσι, ironically for ἐἰ—on the so-called last day, in which we would so willingly believe, if thou wouldst solve our doubts in regard to it), how strange will be the claim of seven men to one woman; whose then will she be? The same question might be asked in the case of every second marriage of a widow or a widower; but they take their stand here upon the *commandment of Moses*, and *therein* lies the emphasis of their question: Did Moses, then, when he made such ordinances for this life, take for granted another life after this, and prepare such confusion for that life? We may well admire the patience, gentleness, and wisdom of the Lord Jesus towards this folly, when we hear His answer!

Ver. 29. The same thing which He here at first answers to these fools, who *honestly* made a show of their folly, He might, in a deeper sense, say also to the Pharisees; indeed He said it to them in a certain sense as often as He referred them to the Scripture, which was read, but not known or understood by them. Yet there is a well-founded difference to be observed in the expression. With keener rebuke He concedes to the Pharisees a certain *knowledge* of the Scriptures (possessing the key of knowledge, Luke xi. 52), although, indeed, not the *true searching* into them which is first of all required (John v. 39); at all events, *their* error is more manifestly shown to be a culpable

[1] As Lange rightly explains it.

Hosted by Google

error, a *not-willing*. In the case of the Sadducees, on the other hand, although with them also the more deeply underlying ground of their *ignorance* and *error* is only to be found in the evil will, He yet alleges against them, first of all, the gentler charge of neglecting all, even the least searching of the Scriptures, an inconsiderate passing over them without the thought that *there* is the *Scripture*, consequently also the power of God. Wherefore it is that He says so often to those Pharisees,—Have ye readers and knowers of Scripture never read or known this or that? While to these Sadducees He says only,—Ye read the Scripture not at all with understanding as ye ought! To those He says beforehand, *Ye hypocrites*—to these, as parallel with that, Ye *err*. Thus does He give to every one his own; to the "enlightened," with their pride of better *knowledge*, He ascribes precisely the worse *error*.

This *erring* which, in a spirit equally gracious and severe, He ascribes to them, was not merely the special error as to the resurrection,[1] which they had frankly brought before Him (with a sincere conviction, and in so far better than those hypocrites), but the fundamental erring as regards the knowledge of the *living God* in general, of which, as He soon shows to them, their *saying that there is no resurrection* was only the natural result. Not to know and acknowledge God in His eternal power and godhead—this is pre-eminently and, properly speaking, the innermost error of the unbeliever. From that proceeds all further folly of unbelief; all ignorance of every doctrine which stretches beyond the life of the senses; all despising and transgressing of the Divine commandment, which has power and meaning only for immortal men; all theoretical rejection of doctrine, and practical violation of morality, as these go necessarily hand in hand, not merely in the consistently developed Sadducees of the time of Christ, but in all who are like them in every age. Now it is true that the voice of the living God ever speaks in reason and conscience, even to the natural man who has corrupted himself through the lusts of error (Ephes. iv. 22), and goes on

[1] Or after all even (according to Hase, himself not knowing the ancient Scripture)—the *Sadducean*, probably old-Mosaic (therefore truly orthodox!) supposition of a *kingdom of shadows*, which Christ had refuted here, not with Scripture, but *only with dialectical adroitness!*

Hosted by Google

corrupting himself, seeking death in the error of his life (Wis. i. 12);—and in so far it might be said also to the heathen,—Ye err because ye know not the truth which is yet in yourselves. But our Lord speaks here to the Sadducees who live in Israel, and can talk of that which Moses has said; therefore He at once calls the superadded *revelation* of the truth by the true God, *Scripture*. Where this Scripture is, with the outward knowledge of its existence, there the sole and essential reason of every error in Divine things is nothing else than the not knowing of this Scripture: this has been proved in a thousand ways down to our own day.[1] In this first word (omitted by St Luke) of the answer, the μὴ εἰδότες in St Matthew is designed at all events to indicate the *reason* of the erring; as St Mark gives prominence to this in the form of the question, οὐ διὰ τοῦτο πλανᾶσθε;

The revealed word of God then takes away all error by its truth; and in particular this word, as being written by the Holy Ghost, and summed up in the Scripture:—let this *axiom*, here unconditionally expressed and taken for granted, in the mouth of the true and faithful Witness, be well considered! All philosophy and all so-called theology which has no Holy Scripture,—which is not built upon His foundation, and does not learn what it knows from this source,—is, when it opposes the existing Scripture with λέγειν μὴ εἶναι, *with saying what is and what is not*, a foolish not-knowing, a great error. When Christ puts the Scripture, rightly known, in opposition to all error, He thereby declares it to be itself *free from error* and *infallible;* namely, in its unity and totality as ἡ γραφή which cannot be broken. (John x. 35.) He says here indeed τὰς γραφάς[2] in the plural; but this is partly to bring to the recollection of the Sadducees the other Scriptures, besides those of Moses, which were still more mistaken by them, and partly to point to the necessity of connecting one Scripture with another,—as is done by Himself in this very instance,—whereby alone their

[1] Καὶ γὰρ ἐντεῦθεν τὰ μυρία ἔφυ κακὰ, ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν γραφῶν ἀγνοίας· ἐντεῦθεν ἡ πολλὴ τῶν αἱρέσεων ἐβλάστησε λύμη, ἐντεῦθεν οἱ ἠμελημένοι βίοι, ἐντεῦθεν οἱ ἀκερδεῖς πόνοι. Chrysost.

[2] Not τὰ ἀληθῆ τῶν γραφῶν, according to the apocryphal understanding of the words, as if it were intended "to distinguish what is false in the Scripture from what is true." Indeed Hilgenfeld makes out precisely this to be the genuine form, altered in St Mark!

Hosted by Google

complete truth can be ascertained.[1] Already in the article τὰς the unity is sufficiently expressed. This unity, however, distributes itself over the entire multiplicity of the canon: this entire canon, then, existing and accredited among the Jews, Christ here *confirms*, in all its separate books, when He says αἱ γραφαί,—speaking of course of the same writings which were so called at that time. Let this, too, be well considered! All that is true of the one saying of God in Moses, which He here interprets as indeed ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ according to the power of God, is therefore true of every saying and verse of the Jewish canon, which He has beforehand comprised in τὰς γραφάς.

Ye err! This He, in whom there is no error or sin, testifies against the erring ones, sadly accusing them, loftily judging them! This is more than if one professor should now say to another, "You are mistaken, Doctor, as it appears to me." Against *His* "Ye err," there is no appeal; whoever, then, declines His authority, in order first to inquire whether the Lord Christ may not Himself err—let him see whither he will carry things, and where he will stop by so doing! *Ye err because ye know not the Scriptures!* The second word in this utterance, spoken by Him who has, from His youth upwards, learned all truth from these *Scriptures* by the Spirit;—not acquiring it indeed in the regular course of the students of that day from the teachers, whom, as a youth, He had perplexed by his questions, but yet all the more truly *learning* it, so that He is now more learned than the learned (John vii. 15). He speaks thus, all whose thinking and speaking, from the first to the last word of His mouth, moved upon the deep basis of Scripture and amid its unlocked treasures; to whom the Scripture had been His rudiments, and would be His prayer-book on the Cross. When He puts the unerring Scripture in opposition to all error, when He declares these books to be *true* in the same word which says to the people who preserved them, *Ye do err*—more is thereby affirmed and decided than by all the well or ill meant *locis de Scripturâ*, and theories of inspiration propounded by dogmatists and reformers and apologists, or their opponents. But the *third* word comes in addition to the second, and belongs essentially to it, as giving ground and emphasis for

[1] Οὐδεμία γραφὴ τῇ ἑτέρᾳ ἐναντία ἐστι. Justin M.

Hosted by Google

us to the decisive affirmation, so that we may understand *wherefore* and *how* the Scripture is to be learned and known:—Ye know not the Scripture *nor the power of God!* All commentators who, hastily passing over this, find here only a reference to the ἀνάστασις that was denied, are themselves deeply in error, overlooking the fact that *Scripture* and *power* are here in the first place correlates, as letter and spirit. Our Lord certainly means to say: These are indeed books written by men, in the language of men; but yet, unlike other books, in them the power of God witnesses and attests itself, in this word and letter lives and speaks the Spirit, in the γράμμα is the πνεῦμα. This, then, is the order and connection of the ideas:—The power of God, in which the Scripture is written; of which, therefore, it testifies; and according to which it is also to be understood and interpreted (2 Pet. i. 20, 21). (See shortly after Matt. xxii. 43 ἐν πνεύματι). If the Jewish scribes, following the expression of Josephus, called it alone true wisdom to be able τὴν τῶν ἱερῶν γραμμάτων δύναμιν ἑρμηνεῦσαι—so thinks also the Master in Israel; but He, in the true spirit and the true power, and they, the erring ones, in the slavish adherence to the letter. One can become a τὴν δύναμιν τῶν γραμμάτων ἑρμηνεῦσαι δυνάμενος only by yielding up his heart to God: in proportion as thou renderest to God what is God's, will He show and give to thee what is His, and what is to become thine, even Himself as *thy God!* "Our eye must be directed to God and His mind; this gives to the Scripture the power which it always has in itself." (Berlenb. B.) "Beneath all the letters of the Scripture lies the Spirit: he who takes all together with upright heart will not miss the Spirit. But they miss it who separate what stands connected, namely, the Scripture and the power of God." (Oetinger.) Therefore, more particularly, because every word of the Scripture proceeds from the Spirit and mind of the ever-living God, so also, in its innermost sense, does it return to this, that we should live before and in God, otherwise the Scripture, as the word of God, would be a contradiction of itself. *According to the sense of the Spirit the entire Scripture aims and points at eternal life*—certifies the denied resurrection. Hence the word of Christ here declares the same thing which Augustine has otherwise expressed: Oculi in tan-

Hosted by Google

tum vident (in Scriptura) in quantum moriuntur huic sæculo; in quantum autem huic vivunt, non vident.[1] Unbelief knows not the eternal power and Godhead of the living personal God out of and above nature, therefore, also, it knows not the supernatural power and meaning of the Scripture, in which the *I* of this God speaks to us, reveals and imparts itself to us. But the power of God is an omnipotence which quickens what is dead (Rom. iv. 17; Acts xxvi. 8), and the raising again also of the flesh is performed by the same Spirit who speaks to us and dwells in us (Rom. viii. 11). It is by the power and in the power of God (1 Cor. vi. 14; xv. 43). Certainly, "the resurrection is no process of nature, but a miracle of omnipotence." It is not metaphysical reasons drawn from the simple and indestructible nature of the human soul, it is not proudly speculative dreamings which make the spirit of man to be God, or such like, that Christ here lays down as a basis from which to confute the Sadducees of all times; but the will expressed in the word, the power attested by the word of Him who is the ὁ μόνος ἔχων ἀθανασίαν (1 Tim. vi. 16), but who hath said to man, "I am thy God," and therefore man also lives. "Man should see the *possibility* of the resurrection in the power of God, and the *reality* or truth of the fulfilment in the Spirit of the entire Scripture, in which it has been promised as the aim and end of the Divine decree." (Kleuker.)

O how severely does this interpretation of Christ (not at all like Doppe's Hermeneutics of the New Testament "writers") rebuke the pitiful error of all those blind critics who can hardly find an immortality in the Old Testament from the beginning, nothing more at best than a notion about a resurrection which found its way into the Old Testament from heathen sources! The *Law* of Moses, as such, if we look in the first place at the isolated letter of it, knew only of cursing and blessing within the limits of the earthly life, and a very proper point of view from which to regard this has already been plainly shown by Warburton: it was the most striking legitimation of this law for the carnal people that its threatening and promising was to come into operation directly upon earth. But inasmuch as the living God,

[1] Zinzendorf: "Reason digs beside it, levity sweeps past it, pride flies over it."

Hosted by Google

the Eternal, by this immediate distribution of reward and punishment, placed Himself in most direct intercourse with His son Israel, this temporal rewarding and punishing could appear only as the *pledge* and *type* of an eternal. For that which God gives or does, in blessing or cursing, cannot be confined within a span of time. Can we suppose that the Lord, who visits the sins of the fathers upon the children, should have prepared no judgment for the fathers themselves who are spared upon earth, or, on the other hand, that the piety of His faithful ones should have its entire reward in—long life and prosperity on the earth? The letter of the law, which raised this question, thereby already indicated in the spirit the answer. The "life" promised by *God* through Moses must already have been life *eternal;* as Christ acknowledges and confirms (Matt. xix. 16, 17), not as an after-interpretation, but as the opening up of the sense belonging to every word spoken by God according to the power of God. As Calvin, in his two excellent chapters de similitudine V. et N. T. and de differentia unius testamenti ab altero (Institt. lib. 2, cap. 10, 11), with penetrating clearness, lays down as the first of the three principal reasons for the similitudo vel potius unitas:—Non carnalem opulentiam ac felicitatem metam fuisse Judæis propositam ad quam *demum* adspirarent, sed in spem immortalitatis fuisse cooptatos; atque hujus adoptionis fidem illis fuisse tum oraculis, tum lege, tum prophetis certo factam. And Pascal says:—"In the promises of the Old Testament every one finds what lies at the bottom of his own heart, temporal blessings or blessings of the Spirit; the first, however, with, the second without, contradiction." The key to the enigma of Job's history, which Moses had already in the wilderness known and written for Israel, is to be found in Job xix. 25–27, where *Vaihinger*, again *erring*, finds an immortality without a resurrection, which is inconceivable not merely in the entire Word of God, but even in true philosophy.[1]

But if any one will begin from below and inquire concerning the "Hebraism," rather than concerning what God says to this people from above, let such an one hear a man whose writings still wait for their proper disciples, the profound thinker *Molitor*. "The supposition that the ancient people of God lived only in the outward, and had no idea of immortality, is in every case

[1] Philosophie der Geschichte oder über die Tradition, 1. 202.

Hosted by Google

extremely inconsistent. *Granted* that Moses had borrowed the idea of his law from the Egyptians, and that the whole Mosaic legislation was merely the project of a great national leader, it would, in fact, be *incomprehensible* why, even as a politician, he did not introduce into his legislation rewards and punishments after death, especially as faith in these had been taught not merely in the Egyptian mysteries, but had even been a common popular idea in Egypt. To a people, however, who, in the midst of heathen nations, could be inspired with the sublime idea of rising to the one only invisible God (without form and likeness) —to such a people the faith in immortality cannot have been so high and remote a thing, but must have been quite congenial to their inmost nature. This faith is even so natural to mankind generally, that there never was a people altogether without the idea of a future life, otherwise they must have been sunk to a level with the brute creation." Far beyond what is implied in the phrase, "gathered to their fathers," which is said even of those who were not buried with their fathers—far beyond the popular conception of the dark realm of shadows parallel to that of the heathen—far beyond this reaches the view of an Abraham, whose God the Lord was, and who spake with him as with a friend from whom He can conceal nothing. Resting in his God as a child on its mother's bosom, he knew most assuredly by simple *faith*, without much γνῶσις, that the mother will not readily destroy her child. In the offering up of Isaac he even rose in *thought* to the re-quickening of the body by the power of God. But Abraham's God could set before the seed of His chosen servant, as the end of their faith, nothing less than the eternal recompense, instead of the enjoyment of sin for a season. All *concealing* of, and thereby removing, the limits between the present and the future life in the promises and threatenings of the law and the prophets, was not so much a withdrawing as rather a *bringing near* of the future life to the present, a certain embodied descent of the eternal recompense into the sphere of time. The hope of life in God after death "rested on the inward feeling of trust in that God who is love, and on the conviction of its being impossible that all the glorious manifestations of His grace towards those who honour and love Him could be wasted only on vanishing shadows. It was the Spirit of God,

Hosted by Google

then, which assured them also of eternal life."[1] They said, "Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever;" and to the sigh of the soul, "Forsake not the work of Thine own hands," the answer was given, "I cannot and will not forsake it!" Quæ divinitus injuncta illis fuit vivendi conditio, assiduum erat exercitium quo admonerentur, se omnium esse miserrimos si in hac modo vita felices essent. (Calvin.) And this inner spiritual experience of the faithful,[2] strengthened and exalted from time to time by addresses and monitions from God, was the *secret tradition* of the δύναμις θεοῦ in the γραφή. With all which, however, we will not deny the difference expressed 2 Tim. i. 10 between the Old and New Testament, between the struggling, misgiving faith of the fathers, and the clear, firm footing which we have on the resurrection of our Saviour from the dust. "It was quite the reverse with the Israelites" (from what it was with the heathen who believed in an existence after death in general, yet not in a coming to God), "inasmuch as with these, faith in a *living God* takes the *first* place; and the faith in a future life, necessarily included in this, very seldom appears, and not at all as a *doctrine*, but, as it were, grows and increases with the ever more clearly appearing promise of the Sun of Righteousness, and in the fulness of time shines forth with full splendour."[3] The reader will pardon this excursus against the Sadducean error, as concerned with Old Testament exegesis; we do not think that we have thereby digressed, but have merely referred the emphatic "Ye do err," which Christ here speaks, to those to whom it properly applies at this day; and at the same time supplied all the fundamental ideas necessary to the understanding of His subsequent exegetical inference—viz., God is not a God of the dead!

Ver. 30. Ye *Sadducees* then do err: since, according to the power of God, the Scripture holds forth an eternal *life*, there is also a resurrection of the *body;* for, without the body, there is

[1] J. G. Müller vom Glauben der Christen ii. 202.

[2] For assuredly "those only can speak of immortality in a purely religious way who have already in themselves the higher life which alone is worthy of the victory over death." Schleiermacher Reden über die Religion, p. 202.

[3] Krummacher, die christliche Volkschule im Bunde mit der Kirche, p. 291.

Hosted by Google

as yet no life of the entire man.[1] After His introductory words, with which everything was already said, Christ now, in the first place with unoffending calmness, speaks of the certain *resurrection*, in opposition to their ἐν τῇ ἀναστάσει, spoken in mockery, and accepts the word from their sneering lips in simple earnestness. (St Mark has also ὅταν ἀναστῶσι, precisely as the mockers have before said.) After this comes a still more special proof from Scripture: ὅτι ἐγείρονται, that the dead rise again. But while Christ here annihilates at one blow the ridiculous difficulty of the Sadducees, He at the same time refutes the carnal conceptions of the Pharisees; for the Talmud sometimes speaks of those who are raised, with as much grossness as the Koran does.[2] The resurrection taught by Christ and the Scripture certainly does not restore the present flesh and blood, which cannot inherit the kingdom of God. Whatever *hath sprung from the fall*,[3] and exists on account of death and in connection with death,—such as the present connection of the sexes in order to the generation of new mortals—that is *done away with!*[4] Here St Luke has a more exact and noteworthy exposition of the saying which is simply abridged in St Matthew and St Mark. *The children of this world:* —that is, as the antithesis shows, not in the same sense as Luke xvi. 8 and elsewhere; it does not mean that those who are in other respects worthy of attaining to the other world, *i.e.*, the children of God, should not marry on earth,[5] but that the saints in the flesh marry and are given in marriage, so long as they have not yet *become partakers* of that life in the spiritual body. Where there is no more "dying" (as in the case of the seven men and the woman), there is no more need of a propagation of the race, no

[1] As the reflection 2 Macc. xii. 43 ss. knows as yet of no other *continuance* after death, than what consists in waiting for the *resurrection*. When Judas cares for the dead as still alive, he has precisely the resurrection in his mind.

[2] For example, Sohar: A woman who has had two husbands in *this world*, is, in the other world, given to the first.

[3] A new proof here of this truth indicated in Moses; for what is conformable to the original image of God in man, cannot be destroyed in eternity.

[4] As may certainly be found taught also in Jewish writings, differently from that adduced before; see the passages in Sepp iii. 268.

[5] As the heretic Marcion perverted the passage, educing from it even a *Deus illius ævi*, who prescribes to His people *jam hic non nubere, quia non sunt filii hujus ævi.*

Hosted by Google

more quickening the seed of a mortal life from the work of the flesh and of *death*. (On this analogy between generation and corruption, information may be obtained from physiologists, as Schubert.) *Children of God*—this means here the completed *υἱοθεσία*, including also the body (Rom. viii. 23; 1 John iii. 1, 2), and is parallel with *children* or heirs, partners of the resurrection, to whom the children of death stand opposed. (Children of God and of the resurrection—in other respects there are no longer *children* and parents.) At the same time, according to the usage of בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים, the expression reaches beyond this so as to comprehend the likeness to the *angels*, the assurance of which the two first Evangelists alone have preserved. They are not *ἰσόθεοι*, but *υἱοὶ τοῦ θεοῦ*; nor have they, as the saying now runs, *become* angels, and yet as glorified men they are certainly *ἰσάγγελοι*. As the *angels*—those powers of God that streamed forth in personal form in the first creation, of whom, although they are mentioned in Scripture (even by Moses), you Sadducees affirm also a foolish *μὴ εἶναι*. Is this too an accommodation to current fictions, on the part of Him who rebuked every error?[1] He speaks, indeed, of angels as being quite as truly personal, as the actual persons of men who married in this world. But it is self-evident that He can, and does, understand this likeness to the angels only of those who are raised to blessedness. There is certainly, as St Paul afterwards teaches, agreeing with the Pharisees, a future resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust (Acts xxiv. 15); or as Christ, agreeing with the prophets, expresses it, "a resurrection of life and a resurrection of condemnation." John v. 29; Dan. xii. 2. The everlasting shame and contempt, however, does not deserve to be called a resurrection in the higher sense; but the condition of the body of the damned is a fearful mystery. Therefore also does the Scripture conceal it, and the New Testament speaks chiefly of the resurrection of the just (Luke xiv. 14). When the resurrection is spoken of in general it is called *ἀνάστασις νεκρῶν* (Acts xxiv. 15–21, xvii. 32; 1 Cor. xv. 12, 13, 21; Heb. vi. 2); the superiority, however, of those who inherit life is denoted by *ἀνάστασις ἐκ νεκρῶν*

[1] Somewhat as Bahrdt interpreted: "they shall then become such beings as you represent to yourselves in the angels," forgetting that the words were addressed to Sadducees.

Hosted by Google

here in Mark and Luke, as in Phil. iii. 11 ἡ ἐξανάστασις τῶν νεκρῶν. That this *resurrection* properly speaking, of the just *out of* death, to the true, eternal life, takes place partly also in time as a *first* resurrection, is elsewhere taught; but whether all who are not condemned have already part in this first resurrection, must, on a careful consideration of such passages as 1 Cor. xv. 23, 24; Rev. xx. 4–6, 12–15, still remain a question. Consequently the ἐκ νεκρῶν is not, with Olshausen and others, necessarily to be explained of the priority of time—(from the collective mass of the νεκροὶ some are raised first)—it is already founded on the essential distinction, that the just are no longer νεκροὶ; while the unjust become in the complete sense of the term νεκροί, when they are raised to eternal death. If (with Nitzsch in his System) we reckon Luke xx. 35 as one of the passages which prove a first resurrection, it is yet in the letter one of the least distinct; and the καταξιωθῆναι (just as at Luke xxi. 36) can also, in the first place, be understood only of the resurrection of the blessed. So much, however, our Lord plainly says, that those who are raised to blessedness in that glorious new world shall be as the angels of God *in the heaven* or *in the heavens*, *i.e.*, as the unfallen angels in their original and preserved glory before God. Hereby is at least assuredly affirmed, that the angels also are not (according to that unscripturally strange conception which corresponds to the equally inconceivable naked immortality of souls) mere "spirits," but have a heavenly *corporality*; for how, otherwise, could those who are raised in the *body* be compared with them exactly in reference to this? Nay more, it can hardly be denied that the form of their corporality must be analogous to the heavenly form of man, although not absolutely the same; see, in proof of this, Rev. xxi. 17. The first point of similarity lies certainly in this, that *they neither marry nor are given in marriage*: —what was animal and θανατῶδες in marriage passes away, what was spiritual, angelic, only remains. But this discontinuance of marriage is far from being the *sole* point of comparison; we are not at liberty even to understand that such as are raised shall be *without distinction of sex*, as the angels certainly are in the full sense; for there is a *physical* difference of sex entering into the entire being of the *human* individual, which can hardly cease. Immortal as angels, in a certain measure sexless as angels: this,

Hosted by Google

however, does not yet exhaust the import of the ἰσάγγελοι thus strongly expressed chiefly in St Luke. "That our angel-nature should consist merely in celibacy, is as incredible as that crowns make kings, because all kings wear crowns."[1] The ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ, like *Him*, 1 John iii. 2, points even still higher up into the heights of glory, where the words, *it doth not appear what we shall be*, express all that we know or understand of it. Our Lord cannot as yet disclose the full mystery of the future state of man, from natural reasons of propriety; but it is to be observed, as showing the gracious gentleness of the Redeemer, that He here attractively holds up, even before these Sadducees, the resurrection which they denied, first of all, in its *glorious* side.

Vers. 31, 32. And now first He turns to the universal and certain reality of the resurrection of the dead,—ὅτι ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροὶ in general. He has already borne witness to this in His own exalted absolute authority; He now condescends, so to speak, to the special proof from a γραφή. Have ye not read? How many an enormous error might be removed by the right reading of a single passage of Scripture, if it were understood according to the power of God! Here it behoves that no word be overlooked, or superficially read, for God's words are indeed deep. It might be said that on this account our Lord does not here cite a passage from the *prophets*, who also plainly testify to the resurrection even in the letter, as Is. xxvi. 19; Ez. xxxvii.; Dan. xii. 2; but a word of God in the writings of Moses which announces the resurrection in the spirit of the letter.—In the book of *Moses*—as St Mark specifies; and with still more emphasis St Luke, "*even* Moses hath showed!" That the Sadducees, although their sect first arose after the closing of the canon, actually *rejected* all the sacred books, excepting the Pentateuch, was a statement of several Fathers who confounded them with the Samaritans; after having been long received, this opinion has been recently refuted on good grounds. Josephus says only that they rejected the παράδοσις τῶν πατέρων in opposition to the γεγραμμένα (or γραφαί).[2] But from their position and character it may still be conjectured that

[1] Kleuker, menschlicher Versuch über den Sohn Gottes. p. 179.

[2] See on this recently Hävernick Einl. in das A. T. 1. 1. 74, as also Winer's Realwörterbuch.

Hosted by Google

they held chiefly by Moses, and treated slightingly the prophets, who were unintelligible, nay adverse, to their system and practice. This middle view, already propounded by Corrodi,[1] Paulus,[2] and others, rests on good ground, although it has not strictly historical testimony. Even Neander thinks it very probable that the Sadducees at least subordinated the prophetical writings to the Pentateuch, and accepted proof only from the latter;[3] Lange has adopted the same view; while Sepp, quite uncritically, determines to abide by the "ancient opinion." This passage, it is true, contains no proof of the rejection of the prophets by the Sadducees; but it hints at the neglect of these exhibited by the persons addressed. For our Lord, all other reasons also being admitted, appears to have special reason for confining Himself to the book of *Moses* in dealing with these Sadducees, and for proving to them from it, in a manner entirely corresponding to their question, that even the lawgiver whose law respecting Levirate marriage they found to be incompatible with a resurrection, yet knew and testified of a resurrection. He would have directly chastised the manifest and bold *contradiction* to *prophetic* testimonies respecting the resurrection, if it had not been His design to presuppose the erroneous theory of the gainsayers, namely, that whatever does not agree with Moses is of no authority in the prophets. *Moses has said*—thus did their objection begin; in opposition to this, Christ puts before them a ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ, which the same Moses has received and recorded. Moses has not merely given laws; God also has said many things which Moses says and writes. The Rabbinical formula of quotation, designating the section, ἐπὶ τοῦ or τῆς βάτου (Mark and Luke), as Rom. xi. 2 ἐν Ἠλίᾳ, is not to no purpose; but it points, at the same time, to that bush as itself a significant emblem of miraculous preservation in the midst of destruction, given on that occasion when the God of the fathers appeared and spake.[4] Moses calls the Lord by the same name as he tells us the Lord

[1] Beleuchtung des Bibelcanons, p. 110.

[2] Komment. über die Evang. i. 196.

[3] Leben Jesu. p. 56. In like manner in the Church History at the beginning, in spite of the arguments adduced against it by Winer.

[4] At that time, in the first place, Israel in the furnace of Egypt, but the prophecy of the symbolical vision stretches further.

Hosted by Google

had called Himself. Moses is acknowledged to be the author of the writings that bear his name. But what we read in his writings God had said; it had been actually spoken by God, and that not to Moses merely, but ῥηθὲν ὑμῖν—the Lord speaks it to the Sadducees, and even now to us. The inference, finally, which our Lord draws from the simple utterance of God,—which they had certainly read often, and yet never thus understood,—is by no means merely an inference supplementarily drawn from it, but rather the innermost meaning and kernel of the Divine word which Moses also certainly understood. It is no mere *hint*, no mere *intimation* lying deeper beneath the surface, as the ἐμήνυσεν in St Luke is wont to be understood (with Luther[1]); but an open declaration and exposition of what this word was designed emphatically to say. (Comp. John xi. 57; Acts xxiii. 30; 1 Cor. x. 28.) Moses, when he wrote down this word of God which he had heard, could evidently understand it of nothing else, and could mean to testify nothing else by it, than that before the God of the living even the dead whose God He calls Himself must live.

This exegesis of Christ has been much slandered by ignorance, much censured by impudence, but, even by intelligent and believing readers, oftener admired than clearly understood. So much must be clear to every one on the surface: If Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob no longer lived, *i.e.*, if they were annihilated, as the Sadducees fancied, then the appeal to the promise which had been given to them also, far from being confirmatory of the faith of Moses and Israel, was rather a bitter irony on the part of God against Himself: "I who have not delivered even those from death!" If this ῥηθὲν ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ is to be understood in any way worthy of God, then must the fathers still exist as *persons*, as their *names* indicate, inasmuch as He thus speaks of them. The ever-living One must otherwise be truly *ashamed* to be called a God of beings who existed only for a short span of time;—as, already during the period of their lives, He was only therefore not ashamed, because they desired an eternal salvation, and He had prepared an eternal salvation for them. Heb. xi. 16. For, although the Present which many lay stress upon,

[1] By myself incorrectly in the first edition.

Hosted by Google

"*I am* their God"—not merely I *was*—is not found in the letter of the original text, it yet lies in its spirit: God fulfils even *to the fathers* His promise given to them, inasmuch as He redeems their seed, blesses them, leads them into the goodly land;—and this is precisely what He means to say. But this very circumstance, that the fathers were already dead when God nevertheless called Himself their God, is by no means, properly speaking, the nerve of the interpretation. It merely strengthens the argument; but, independently of it, the same inference must be drawn even from the word of God to the living Abraham, "I am *thy God!*" This is the deepest ground of the inference. I am in the habit of thus simply explaining it to my catechumens: If the King of Prussia were to say to a protegé and favourite, "I am *thy* king!" this person might reckon on the king's entire power and favour, with all that he has, so long as he is King of Prussia. Therefore *thy God*—with all that I, as God, am and can do, *so long* as I am and continue to be God. In order to receive and experience this, the sum and substance of the Divine promise, nothing less than eternity is necessary; for what the Lord blesses is blessed for ever (1 Chron. xviii. 27), he to whom God gives Himself has therewith given to him an eternal life, so that he *lives to God*, as God is God to him.[1] Now from this there seems indeed to follow, in the first place, only a continuation of existence, and not a resurrection; but it only seems so until, in addition to the word "God," we rightly read the names Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The living God gives, by His power, life to His own; but Abraham's *soul* is not the entire Abraham, and without body Abraham is not entirely living.[2] So long as the body lies dead in the earth, the entire man is still reckoned among the *dead*. "In this state the expression, I am thy God! cannot be entirely fulfilled *in the man;* for God is not a God of the dead, but of the living." (Roos.)

Again, on the other side, God's promise is, from the first be-

[1] On this "centre-point of all the proofs of immortality" Lange speaks well in his philosophische Dogmatik (p. 259)—which in other respects, indeed, we will not acknowledge.

[2] Nam ipse Abraham, quantus quantus est, et in quantum Abraham nominatur, *i.e.*, non Abrahae tantummodo anima sed etiam corpus, cui sigillum quoque promissionis inditum est, habet *Deum*. (Bengel.)

Hosted by Google

ginning till the consummation, gradually fulfilled. It has already always a certain truth; and as Abraham still lived in the body of death before God (Gen. xvii. 18), so does he yet *live* also in the intervening period without body, because he is not without his God. This word testifies against a sleep of the soul, as Lavater rightly remarked; and in like manner against an "inactive repose" of the dead, as J. G. Müller says in reference to certain false representations of the "rest in God." But not *this* alone: the word applies in the first place indeed truly to the elect, and to believers; but it further includes all men whose God the Lord on His part offers to become; hence our Lord takes it as a proof of the resurrection *of the dead* in general—ὅτι ἐγείρονται οἱ νεκροί. "God is not a God of the dead, but of the living," means finally: As surely as all men whom God has created as persons, and whom also as persons He wills to save, are God's, so surely are they His not as dead—even those who are relatively dead are not properly dead before Him; hence St Luke rightly concludes the idea with the words, "for *all* live to Him." They *should* live to Him, as all Israel, according to its calling (and—which indeed remains as yet in the background—all mankind), would if what belongs to God were given to Him. They must and shall live to Him, at least for the judgment; and every one, according to the whole man, διὰ τοῦ σώματος (2 Cor. v. 10) must give account of this, that God has said to him: I will be *thy* God!

Our Lord, by this designation of the covenant-God—a designation which still continued in daily use among the Jews, and which God had given to Himself,—chiefly reminds the heretics in Israel, who had apostatised from the living God, of that first great covenant-word before and at the giving of the law, "I, the Lord, am thy God!" When a superficial unbelief would extort from Him the wretched inference that the law of Moses has no regard to a living on, and living again, of the dead through the power of God—He in holy earnest leads the erring ones by one stroke into the very centre-point of the matter, where the answer lies open as day to every one who still acknowledges a "God." Yes, the resurrection stands in connection with the *giving of the law*, in so far as precisely in the law the personal God makes men to be the ever-living covenant-children of the eternal God.

Hosted by Google

(See Lange iii. 207.) Thus does Christ teach them to understand the ancient Scripture,—law and promise ever with and in each other—as on Sinai, according to the power of God; and He refers these miserable men, to whom the word "God" can certainly be only an empty name so long as they do not suppose they shall live beyond the short span of time, to the power of this single name for men, a name which includes everything, not excepting the resurrection. Because the giving of the law by the first word upon Sinai, and the accomplished redemption of the seed out of Egypt, stands in closest connection with the promise to the Fathers, Christ evidently places in the foreground the fundamental idea of the *covenant*, in which law and promise again become one;—namely, that God calls Himself the God of a man, and therefore in reality is so. If the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob is the one true living God—and this His only begotten Son here again solemnly testifies! comp. John viii. 54–56; Acts iii. 13—then does the vindication of the honour of His name, that He is not a God of the dead, extend to the place where all to whom He hath revealed Himself are represented as again alive before Him; some, indeed, for the angel-like glory of eternal life, the rest—? The Lord preserve us from having to experience the consuming fire of the living God, as the dead who cannot die.—

In St Mark we find still a conclusion which returns to the beginning: Therefore do ye Sadducees (ὑμεῖς as ῥηθὲν ὑμῖν) err *greatly*, properly πολύ; as in the article of the resurrection, so in many ways in all your other errors, and all for this one reason. But what would Christ say now to those who, more *consistently*, indeed, than the Sadducees, will acknowledge no living, personal, revealed God, and who substitute for the *power* of the manifest *God*, who graciously wills to give Himself to man in order to eternal life, "the *hidden* being of the *universe* which has *no* power in itself to offer resistance to the boldness of science, but must disclose itself at its summons,"[1]—only however for a moment, so long as this individual *I* lives thus bold. We cannot see that the highest courage of science consists in knowing human personalities without the *original Person*, by whom they

[1] So the motto to Hegel's Philosophy taken from his lips, in extracts by Franz and Hillert.

Hosted by Google

are and live; for, Are living men but the changing soap-bubbles of a dead God? Is the universe no *uni*verse? We do not presume entirely to know and to judge of the hidden meaning of the master; but to the scholars who deny the personality of God as distinct from the world, and the individual existence of men after death, so frankly that one can understand them,—to the λέγοντες μὴ εἶναι πνεῦμα, with all their noise about spirit, we say in the name of the Lord, This is no longer error, but—either a frenzy in which you have lost yourselves, no longer to know that *we live and move and have our being in Him*—or there remains nothing else but Satan's conscious lie against his Creator, "*Thou* art *not* my God! *shalt* not be my God!" notwithstanding which lies, however, he, too, cannot and will not die throughout eternity, for even Satan as Satan *must* live to the judging God.

ANSWER TO THE QUESTION, WHICH IS THE GREAT COMMANDMENT?

(Matt. xxii. 37–45; Mark xii. 29–37; Luke xx. 41–44.)

Although the Pharisees would be quite willing to see the Sadducees put to silence, they are yet not satisfied that this should be done by *Jesus;* His piercing answer provokes them anew to deliberate whether there be then no way at all in which they can get at Him! One of their number, who had taken part in this deliberation (for so must we understand St Matthew), brings forward a new question. He is a Pharisee by sect, a νομικὸς or νομοδιδάσκαλος (Luke v. 17; Acts v. 34), *i.e.*, one who knows and is a teacher of the law, by office (Tit. iii. 13); though, as this was only an inferior class of γραμματεῖς, St Mark terms him εἷς τῶν γραμματέων. *At the same time,* however,—and it is quite consistent with this, and was observed by St Mark immediately before,—the man asks his question not with a bad but a good intention, from an interest peculiar to himself, and with a satisfaction at Christ's former answer: this is precisely what qualifies him for being the ἐγκάθετος to the others who have thus pushed him forward. There is no necessity, therefore, of giving a different interpretation to the "tempting" in

Hosted by Google

St Matthew (as Olshausen, "from a well-meaning spirit of inquiry"), but the expression must here certainly retain its bad sense. St Matthew views the incident as a whole, and regards this question, apart from the disposition of the questioner, as belonging to all the πειράζειν now set on foot against Jesus. The interrogator himself seeks instruction; the others however are ready in every case to *dispute* upon the answer, because they actually hold the question to be a disputed puzzle-question not to be solved.

Like a genuine νομικός, in disposition as well as in office, who would zealously prosecute only the law (comp. this force of the title Luke vii. 30, x. 25) and knew nothing higher, he brings forward as μάχη νομική (Tit. iii. 9) a question which was at that time much disputed;—one of the highest importance indeed, when taken in connection with the true answer to it, but proposed by the present questioner only in foolish misunderstanding. Already, in the Sermon on the Mount, had Christ rebuked the distinguishing between *small* and *great* commandments, in so far as it was foolish; the fools, however, at the last begin anew with this, and give Him occasion to say something else in opposition to it. Instead of being humbled by the spiritual requirement of heart-obedience towards the one God, in which the entire law is a unity, they had endless quarrels about the question:—"If Moses has enjoined upon us 365 prohibitions, and 248 commands, making in all 613 different precepts and ordinances[1]—surely all these cannot be equally important, nor every transgression equally grievous! Which then are the important, and which the inconsiderable?" It was only indeed because they were conscious of transgressions that they asked such a question; they would gladly throw away at least some of these as trifling, and in their perversity they dealt thus precisely with the *weightier matters of the law*. (Chap. xxiii. 23.) This inquirer, in order to test the wisdom of Christ, presents his question in the most keen and difficult form; for as he will have a single commandment specified to which Christ

[1] So R. Simlai in the Tractate Makkoth: the prohibitions correspond to the number of the days of the year, the commandments to the number of the members of the human body, the sum corresponds to the word תורה (which, however, make only 611). See the specification in Beer's Geschichte d. Juden. 1, 246, 255 ss.

Hosted by Google

concedes pre-eminence over the rest: μεγάλη ἐν τῷ νόμῳ, *i.e.* the absolutely great, the greatest, ἐντολή above all the rest. (St Mark, πρώτη πάντων, the latter to be taken as neuter,—the chiefest of *all* and of *every sort;* for πασῶν and πασῶν τῶν ἐντολῶν are only corrections which have arisen from not understanding *this.*) These νομικοί do not even understand the *unity* of the law in the spiritual meaning and ground of all its single commandments; therefore, of course, much less do they understand its *insufficiency* to make the sinful man righteous. Christ, however, again bears witness to both these truths, as He had already done in the Sermon on the Mount. In particular, he here again brings into clear prominence that fundamental law of perfect love which judges us; the fundamental requirement of the whole heart for God and our neighbour which *cannot be fulfilled* by us who are evil; and then He intimates whence alone the grace that is necessary in order to the *fulfilment* of the law can come, viz., from *Christ* who is come in it. He teaches, in the first place, nothing new concerning the *commandments;* for when any one asks Him about the law He never fails to refer back only to Moses. But that which is overlooked and misunderstood He brings forth into its true light. Christ has no other answer to give than that which was rightly given by the scribe (Luke x. 27). But this answer was unfortunately very much disputed; there did not exist (as Lange thinks) as yet "a harmonious view respecting it in the Rabbinical theology."

Vers. 37, 38. From Deuteronomy,—from the authentic interpretation of the letter of the Sinaitic law already contained therein, which afterwards takes the form of an exhortation to repentance, and ends with the promise of circumcision of the heart—from this book does Christ adduce the one greatest, all-embracing commandment. Moses has already expressed it so plainly that all questioning about it appears as blindness, in that place where, with the emphatic "*Hear, O Israel,*" he announces at once the fundamental doctrine of the unity of God, and the one requirement of this God from His people. Thus (following chap. v.) the interpretation of the *first* commandment begins with and is founded upon the covenant-word, which is placed in the forefront: "*I am the Lord thy God.*" St Mark, giving the citation in full, has the "Hear, O Israel," before it, which

Hosted by Google

lays the foundation of what follows, and indeed belongs to it: even if our Lord had not here expressed it, He would yet bring it to mind, presupposing it in the citation of this well-known passage. As and because God is one, His law also, though consisting of manifold commandments, must have a unity flowing from His being and will; just as from the same ground the unity of the law and the promise is further deduced in Gal. iii. 20. The one God requires the whole heart united in itself (Ps. lxxxvi. 11 יַחֵד לְבָבִי) in one love, corresponding to His love and His alone loveliness. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, thou—the *entire man*, inwardly and outwardly, with spirit, soul, and body: that is the meaning of the Hebrew original, where לֵבָב (as in such references is frequently the case in the Old Testament) corresponds to the innermost part of the man or the kernel of his being (which is then more exactly called *mind*); נֶפֶשׁ corresponds to the unity of all changing moods or states, therefore to the *disposition* of the ψυχή (proceeding from the will); מְאֹד, to sum up all, corresponds again to all the powers and capacities, of the *life* both of the soul and the body, carried into outward action. The Evangelists deviate here from the (also not quite suitable) rendering of the LXX, with which Luke x. 27 is to be compared. Καρδία is the correct rendering for the first; for the third, however, ἰσχύς is not merely not quite so correct, but (dividing the original word into two) there is besides the explanatory διάνοια which has alone remained in St Matthew. Since *heart* and *soul* have been already named, διάνοια can only signify what we found before in מְאֹד; hence we regard as profound and striking the too much overlooked remark of Grotius: διανοίας hic is est sensus, qui apud *Thucydidem*, διάνοιαν ἔχω πρὸς τὸ καλὸν τῆς πράξεως: id est, in id intentus sum. Idem autem valet, sive dicas pro viribus, sive *omni studio atque contentione*. *Beck's* interpretation amounts to the same thing, when he understands διάνοια of "the inner movement that impels toward outward objects, and works through them, the impulse of thought, and will, in its intercourse with, and relation to the outer world."[1] Luther means the same by his *Gemüth* according to the old usage: that is my *mind*, all my heart and mind is in it, and after it. *With all thy heart*—this is for the rest clear enough,

[1] Bibl. Seelenlehre, p. 58, comp. p. 110.

Hosted by Google

in whatever way we interpret the following expositions, and this first thing is, therefore, constantly repeated by Moses and all the Prophets; only at 2 Kings xxiii. 25, is the original passage of Moses found complete with the מְאֹד. And the principal word, properly speaking, which embraces all commandments in its unity—viz., *Thou shalt love!*—this God Himself spake at first from Sinai: To those that *love Me and keep My commandments* (Ex. xx. 6). Consequently in 1 John v. 3, there is *in thesi* nothing peculiar to the New Testament, but there is certainly in *praxi*, as regards the βαρεῖαι οὐκ εἰσίν.—*This* is the chiefest and greatest commandment; thus with simple majesty, in His decisive and instructive answer, does Christ testify, literally,—The *first* and *great*. To the μεγάλη, which was all that was in the question, he adds the confirmatory πρώτη, which of course cannot mean the same thing, but rather furnishes the exegetical proof of the μεγάλη drawn from the place which that commandment occupies. For, this commandment lies already in the *first* word from Mount Sinai, as afterwards in the *first* commandment (according to the explanation of it given by Moses, and confirmed by Christ, that all things which the heart loves besides God and out of Him are אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים); it in like manner stands again *at the head* of the Decalogue, repeated by Moses in an admonitory form in Deuteronomy. It is the first in order of rank, because the first in the nature of the thing, and, indeed, *should* be seen to be the first previous to all questioning and inquiring about the commandments! If St Mark's version of the *question*, πρώτη πάντων, were to be taken as literally genuine (which, however, we are inclined to doubt), then Christ gives a different sense to the expression in the *answer*, which would then in substance say: Canst thou then as a νομικός be only asking *this;* hast thou not read what the word of God and of Moses has *put in the first place?* Now what is there called the πρώτη *is* the πρώτη, the *primum* praeceptum is the *primarium*—"the commandment put according to God's arrangement, in the first place, is also the most excellent of all." (Olshausen.) Nay, more, as we shall immediately see, it is the *only* commandment, the comprehensive sum of all existing or conceivable commands and prohibitions.

Ver. 39, 40. And now can there be in addition to this a δευτέρα

Hosted by Google

ἐντολή, *a second commandment?* Certainly; for although the first and sole fundamental commandment were sufficient to say and to enjoin everything, it is yet not enough for the deaf ears and hard heart of man. If any man saith, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; but because we might all be such liars, *therefore* we have further this commandment from Him, that he who loves God love his brother also. The explanation of the enigma by which this commandment, at first represented as subordinate, as *second*, is then made *equally* valid with the first, and *one* with it, was a new answer on the part of Christ; furnishing more than the question required, but yet only thoroughly exhausting the point in question. The Pharisee presents himself with his burnt-offerings and sacrifices, his fasting twice in the week, his tithe of mint, anise and cummin; and utters the most fearfully frank lie of all human lies:—Do not I then love my *God* with all my heart, with all that I have and owe to Him, and rather beyond what is required than too little? In opposition to this stands the other commandment respecting the love of our neighbour, from the transgression of which the Saviour elsewhere seeks to bring conviction home to them (Matt. xix. 18; Luke x. 30). God indeed can say, Behold I, even I, am He, and besides Me there is no God! (Deut. xxxii. 39), but man must confess before God,—There are *others beside me!* There are men like me before God who has created them also, and, in holy right, loves them all alike, men who are to be esteemed equally with me. Therefore, before God, and for God's sake, ought I to give up idolatrous selfishness; and as I should and dare love *myself* only as God's creature, a vessel and instrument of His grace and honour, *in like manner* must I love my neighbour precisely thus, not more and not less, and also not otherwise. Therefore Moses had, in an earlier book and chapter, where, in the most proper sense, the instructive tracing back of the manifold commandments to their unity predominates, uttered the other great word which Christ now adduces and places beside the first:—Thou shalt love *thy neighbour* as thyself, *for I am the Lord!* (Lev. xix. 18.) If here, and in other places, the unity of the two tables of the law, the point of unity of all obligations and all conduct towards God and man, was distinctly *indicated*—yet this unity was first brought forward and

Hosted by Google

made to shine in the full light of the New Testament by Christ. Already in the Sermon on the Mount, after adducing special commandments, He declares this word concerning the love of our neighbour in opposition to the Pharisaic addition which nullified it. Now, as a proper conclusion to all His teaching He says with the most perfect clearness—in opposition to the foolish manner of isolating and separating the enumerated ἐντολαί pursued by the *scribes and lawyers:*—The *second* not merely follows the *first*, and is placed after it, but is *like* unto it! Properly ὁμοία, ejusdem indolis, *of the same nature and origin*, quite as fundamental and comprehensive; thus it is also a πρώτη, although again only a δευτέρα which is comprehended in the unity of the first. The law is not an aggregate of all sorts of requirements:—"Thou shalt do this and that, and not do this and that!" as is the false conception of many people even at this day, but a living organism: as a whole (ὅλος ὁ νόμος) it is one *in these two* commandments, which are themselves again one through the one *love* of the whole heart towards God and our neighbour, towards our neighbour for God's sake. *As thyself* is not merely a limitation of the presupposed and existing natural self-love, as those think who again outwardly measure the words; but a complete removal and transformation of this natural selfishness, in which the slighting and hating of our neighbour was an essential element, so that a new love in God arises, which knows only of the equality of all before God's holy right, in God's blessing love. Then (but not before) it is the loving thy neighbour *as truly*, and *altogether* as thyself; so that everything which thou desirest to thyself from God and thy fellow-creatures, be also given and shown to them. God by no means requires and *commands* thee "to love thy neighbour *more* than thyself," for this goes beyond what is right;[1] nay it must be said, properly speaking, that all in this way which a spontaneously overflowing love can do, cannot be called *more*, inasmuch as I only benefit and satisfy myself and my innermost impulse of love in his sacrifice, just as God Himself does in His most condescending

[1] Therefore not as Sartorius expresses it: "one's neighbour in the place of oneself," which can only be understood of the *wrong* "self." But as Jul. Müller (Lehre v. d. Sünde i. 147, note) rightly acknowledges: "There remains also a valid self-love."

Hosted by Google

love! Or, in giving thyself up for thy neighbour, dost thou actually *offend* thy true self? Then this would not be the reality of what is required; such love would not be pure and proper *love*.

That which St Mark (probably following his own development of the thought, as similarly elsewhere) merely in repetition expresses thus, "There is none other greater commandment than these"—St Matthew gives in what we must regard as the original expression of Christ, ver. 40. In *these two* commandments He has set forth the *Decalogue* as the permanent kernel of the law for all men, and designated it according to its *two tables*. The old controversy of the churches respecting the distribution of the particular commandments in the tables finds here its incontrovertibly clear decision, if men only could and would read it. Wherefore, then, *two* tables of the one law for the expression of these two fundamental commandments? The law is so entirely one, that not even its two tables are of two kinds, but the love of our neighbour also is required even by the first אֲנִי יְהוָה. Yet the second table is a second, because all true love of our neighbour springs from and consists in the love of God; and the saying of the moral-Pharisees, "I love my brother!" is, so long as they hate God, the God who reveals Himself, only the same inverted lie. The *five* commandments of the second table which are summed up in the second word we find written in Rom. xiii. 8–10: there remain for the first the five which speak of the one God; His true revelation without, and in opposition to, every likeness of Him made and contrived by man; then of His name; His day; and His human representatives and images. On these two commandments *hangs* the whole law, κρέμαται[1]—this may be, as is generally supposed, a latina locutio, as Fritzsche says: in hoc utroque praecepto omnium, quæ in V. T. leguntur, legum cardo vertitur; so that if we loose this one double band, the whole has nothing more to hold it together, and it falls to the ground.[2] It may have been a proverbially Rabbinical phrase, as Hartmann[3] cites from the Mischna vi. 53 an analogous תלה.

[1] Vulg. pendet—hence Bengel prefers κρέμαται to the κρέμανται, certainly as regards the sense rightly.

[2] The Greek usage also offers something similar, as in Plato (de Legg. viii.) ἐξ ὧν κρεμαμένη πᾶσα ψυχὴ πολίτου.

[3] Die enge Verbindung des A. T. mit dem Neuen. p. 130.

Hosted by Google

Christ, however, as also without doubt the Rabbinical saying, appears to us to point by the metaphorical expression to those symbolical tassels worn by the Pharisees on their garments, and enjoined by Moses as a memorial of the commandments: two as the two tables, in each many threads, but bound together in one blue string, *i.e.*, "many commandments of one indivisible heavenly law of love."[1] Finally, all the law *and the Prophets?* Just as is meant in the Sermon on the Mount (chap. vii. 12, and v. 17). And the Prophets—who in the Spirit testify further of the fulfilment of the letter, as Moses the first great Prophet does in Deuteronomy; *in the first place* here, in so far as they *demand* this fulfilment, insist on it, in order then to point to the fulfilling grace and the future Fulfiller.

For, as soon as the spiritual *unity* of the law is recognised by the man who no longer occupies himself with single commandments in order to self-justification, its *insufficiency* can and will also be perceived. Not any insufficiency or imperfection of the law in itself; for, who can conceive, command, or do anything more perfect, anything reaching higher and deeper than what these two fundamental commandments express? But *for us* the commandment is not sufficient to *give* us what we have lost in the fall,—the *love* of God, and therewith the love of our neighbour. We are rebellious children and disobedient servants from our birth; as our trespass against that commandment which is the connecting link of the two tables, and which in another sense is called the *first* commandment, Eph. vi. 2, declares. Not even the slavish fear, much less the childlike fear which is the beginning of wisdom, and which leads to love, is naturally present in us (Mal. i. 6), until at least a πνεῦμα δουλείας is *received* (Rom. viii. 15); but only the evil, rebellious, continually sinning fear of Adam *after* the fall. And yet it is, *Thou shalt—love!* This, although right and true as regards God's inviolable claim, is yet, as regards the fulfilment, a complete contradiction; for love is a free matter of the *heart*, to be

[1] Which interpretation given by Meyer we are inclined to prefer to that other in Lange, according to which the threads fastened together would be "the varying play of the feelings and thoughts." For, in Num. xv. 39, it is expressly said beforehand, "that ye may look upon it, and remember all the *commandments* of the Lord."

Hosted by Google

produced and forced by no *shall*. Precisely this unnatural "*shall*" is the handwriting which attests our *debt*, our bankruptcy; if there were love, then there would be no need of this, and still less of its being carried out into mere details—Thou shalt do so, thou shalt not do so,—of which, properly speaking, as the manifold legislation of Moses in Israel is designed to show, there is no end to be found, and yet all are in vain. Oh that they had such an *heart!* Deut. v. 29; xxix. 4. Let this book of the law be a witness against thee! chap. xxxi. 26. But the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, chap. xxx. 6. This alone remains—as already Moses says as a prophet. "Moses gave to you the law, and none of you keepeth the law; for ye seek to *kill Me* (John vii. 19), with hatred against God and the Son of Man, in one and the same manifestation of your sin:" this alone remained in Israel when Christ came, comp. Acts vii. 52, 53. With all thy heart, with all thy strength—this does Christ require of us; but the whole head is sick, the whole heart is faint, there is no soundness in it. (Is. i. 5, 6.) And if thou wert to treat thy *heart* as a *garment*, and to cleanse it outwardly in the mere performance of nothing but commandments; wert thou to carry the "categorical imperative" so far in thy virtue (which is to have all the more value the more it is extorted from an unwilling heart—O the perversity!) as to give up to the gracious God not merely ten pieces of the mantle out of the twelve, as Ahias gave to Jeroboam, but 999 out of 1000, etc., *yet* would the Lord answer, I cannot take it, it is not the whole! And, properly speaking, the whole heart with all its disobedience would be withheld with the tenth or hundred thousandth part that was kept back. For בְּכָל מְאֹדֶךָ means not "as much as possible"—namely for us weak, sinful men.

The Scribe frankly acknowledged that the Lord was right; repeated with all the delight of a new discovery the great truth long since known to him from the letter of the Scripture; and added, of his own accord, as a proof that he *understood* it, the words,—"*This* is *more* than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices; love and inclination is what is required, not service and work; all that is outwardly brought as an offering to the Lord is ordained and accepted only on account of the heart." In this he answered νουνεχῶς or νουνεχόντως; and therefore does Christ

Hosted by Google

praise him, although (as Braune remarks) only with measured praise, which acknowledges the clear *insight* as good, and now exhorts to practical progress, to *entering in*. Thou art *not far* from the kingdom of God. Thou standest with this knowledge at the door; set thy foot on the threshold of repentance, and come within to faith! (Si non procul es, intra: alias præstiterit procul fuisse.) "I alone am what thou yet wantest!" (v. Meyer.) Mark x. 21.[1]

Understand we now, without going further, how profoundly the question concerning *the Christ*, which the Lord Jesus propounds in the following verses, is connected with the answer respecting the law? The Lord now lives and moves with all His thoughts in the profound unity of His final and conclusive testimony to Israel and the world; whatever presses upon Him from without He immediately weaves into this, and makes every thing a link of connection always leading back to the one thing. First: *Give to God* what is God's, yourselves also with your whole heart—this was the *requirement of the law*. Then, secondly: This God, who entered into a covenant with us already in the law, *is a God of the living;* He has already said to the fathers, as also to Israel, I will yet be *your*—the sinner's —God, and *give* to you what is Mine, what you have not, even to the extent of glorification in an endless life—this was the *promise*, the Gospel, in and before the Law. The third question, foolish as it may have been in its setting out from the external conception of great and small commandments, His wisdom so directs in the answer that He now at the conclusion combines the two, the Law and the Gospel.[2] He has announced the *Law* in its two fundamental commandments, as, at the conclusion of the Old Testament, Malachi declares the same, chap. i. 6 and ii. 10 (comp. chap. iv. 4). He has testified that God is

[1] Irenaeus gives an apocryphal addition (Haeres i. 17), according to which Christ is represented as having said: "I have long since had the desire to hear such words, and have not yet found the speaker."

[2] When Braune designates these three questions as belonging to *politics*, *philosophy*, and *morals*, it is only the opinion of the *questioners* that is thereby denoted—and then it would be better to say Dogmatics instead of Philosophy.

Hosted by Google

love, in the *highest commandment* which can only require the same love; forthwith He shows how the same love gives itself to sinners in the *highest gift*, in the only begotten *Son*. They durst not ask *Him* any more questions (St Mark, ver. 34), for he who will not repent in presence of the Law does not ask willingly or earnestly about Christ; He, however, does not leave them, but asks the question Himself, in order yet to allure them to grace.[1] "Here the great Prophet at parting has represented the great sum of *the Law and the Gospel*"—we say with Bengel and all intelligent preachers on this passage.

Vers. 41, 42. You have in your Old Testament something else besides law and commandments. The Law and the *Prophets*—have I said; this, however, reaches further. The end of all prophecy, the centre-point of all the *Prophets*, from which the proto-gospel in Moses begins, with which Malachi ends, is the *Christ*, whom ye look for, and will not recognise in Me. How think ye of this Christ? *i.e.* not precisely, What think ye of the Son of Man, of Me? although after all the foregoing testimony of our Lord, and, according to the consciousness of the Pharisees, it is almost the same. "*How think ye? i.e. For what*, according to your conception and opinion, is a Christ to come to you, and am I come?" Ah! this they knew not indeed, because they knew not the law and their sin. "*Whose son* is He?" Thus asks the Lord, because He already knows what *they* will say to this, and what He will then say;—thus does He at once open up the way to His *God-human personality*, in which alone the grace and gift of God, that redeems from sin and establishes the law, could be given.[2] *David's son*—the name denotes their *Messiah*, according to all their notions, besides whom they know or at least are willing to know of none other. "For although the super-terrestrial nature of the

[1] St Luke has lost this entire connection; therefore he puts the testimony concerning Christ only as a continuation of a discourse of Christ without the intermediate answer.

[2] How lamentably is *this* signification of the fundamental and conclusive question, here appearing in the right place, evaded, when, for example, Hase can think that, "He *proved* to them His *dialectical* embarrassment by proposing a *sophistical* question on the Messianic signification of the 110th Psalm!!"

Hosted by Google

Messiah was not entirely unknown to the learned (chap. xxvi. 63; John vii. 27; xii. 34), yet the principal thing to them was the *visible world-monarch of the lineage of David.*" (v. Meyer.)

Vers. 43–45. What David said ἐν πνεύματι (of which we shall speak afterwards) our Lord here interprets in a literally grammatico-historical way; and this was the only possible way, for in this plain and direct utterance no spiritual interpretation is needed,—the words and letters speak clearly of themselves. There is certainly a typical connection for this 110th Psalm in David's history (for that was still, generally speaking, the period of the type); and we long ago in another place thus traced it: "David restores in the conquered Sion the Salem of Melchisedec, as the successor of whom he may now be regarded; after all his sufferings and conflicts he fetches the ark of the covenant, acting as a priest, in order henceforth to dwell in, or beside the house of the Lord; he receives through Nathan that fundamental promise respecting the everlasting throne of the Messiah." But it is far wide of the mark to say (according to Hofmann's system), that the Psalm can *only* in the first place speak of this type, in which alone the prophecy is afterwards to be sought and found. The Spirit of prophecy rather makes these typical relations only a point of connection; inasmuch as He here (which is well to be observed) teaches the same king *David* himself to call *his Archetype,*—Him who was to come—not his son or descendant, but *his Lord.* Our Lord does not now go further than the beginning of the profound Psalm, though He includes also as a side-glance the threatening allusion to His enemies; that other word concerning the priesthood of Melchisedec the Spirit at a later period interprets in the Epistle to the Hebrews;—the last three verses only the last days will bring into clear fulfilment. He does not expressly say that the *Holy Spirit* uttered by the mouth of David what He here cites (as is true of the *unconscious* typical references to Judas, Acts i. 16); but that *David* in the Spirit called Him *Lord,* just as before Moses called the Lord a God of Abraham. Therefore He intimates that David himself meant to point to something by this;—that he had plainly in his mind the thought of a Divine dignity as belonging to a man. (2 Sam. vii. 19; 1 Chron. xviii. 17.) This appears still more strongly in St Mark: αὐτὸς γὰρ Δαυὶδ

Hosted by Google

εἶπεν, David *himself* calls the promised son his *Lord*. It is true that Christ says according to all the three Evangelists merely κύριον καλεῖ or λέγει, and not expressly κύριον αὐτοῦ. This would have perfectly corresponded to the κυρίῳ μου in the citation, and the υἱὸς αὐτοῦ afterwards; and He might at the same time have pointed to ver. 5 in the Psalm, where the אֲדֹנָי actually recurs as אֲדֹנָי. Still, this remains uncertain; and at all events the main force of the demonstrative question lies in this, that even David ascribes, in reference to himself, the name *Lord* to him who, in other respects, is his son.[1] The proof of the Divine dignity lies, first of all, simply in the κυρίῳ μου; then, as doubling its force, in the sitting *at the right hand* of Jehovah.[2] Jesus might certainly have adduced many other "prophetic passages which declare the Divinity of the Messiah:" such as Micah v. 1, "the goings forth from everlasting" (which the high priests themselves testified of to Herod); Ps. xlv. 7, 8, אֱלֹהִים together with אֱלֹהִים similar to what we have here; Mal. iii. 1, the אָדוֹן who comes to His temple; Is. vii. 14, ix. 5, the עִמָּנוּ אֵל and גִּבּוֹר אֵל; Jer. xxiii. 6, even יְהוָה צִדְקֵנוּ. But He takes as being most suitable the passage which comprehends David's Son and David's Lord in one Divine-human person; and Sir. li. 10, in the very remarkable words ἐπεκαλεσάμην κύριον πατέρα κυρίου μου, so corresponds to that passage, that it is plain believers under the Old Testament well understood it, and appropriated it to themselves, nay even by diligent search without the prophetic Spirit correctly carried it further out. The interpretation of this passage as a whole is not called for here, but belongs to a commentary on the Psalms; we have given it in our own, and now only observe how the concluding question of Christ, πῶς

[1] With great injustice, therefore, does Neander maintain that "the argument of Christ remains valid, even although it could be proved that David was *not* the author of the psalm" (which on historical and exegetical ground must be denied). Our "Rabbinical theology of the letter" against which he bids us be on our guard is, as we hope, also in accordance with the *Spirit* of Christ; our interpretation, it is hoped, refutes all such strange caprice as can take its rise and subsist only in the want of proper understanding of the word to be interpreted.

[2] Whereupon Bengel, with perfect propriety, mentions the just inference as regards the state of humiliation; "Ergo Dominus Davidis erat, *antequam ei diceret* Dominus: Sede."

Hosted by Google

υἱὸς αὐτοῦ ἐστι; is intended to draw forth precisely that πατέρα of Sirach. "Am I then a blasphemer when I call *God* My *Father* and Myself *His* Son (John v. 18)? David testifies the same of Me as Him who was to come; He who sits at the right hand is certainly the Son, to whom Jehovah as Father gives up the Kingdom (Matt. xxii. 2), to whom the same Divine dignity and honour are due, since only on this supposition can David already call Him his Lord (comp. John viii. 56)." The question implies by a plain deduction both these things: "Can He therefore be *only* David's Son? And how is this Lord of David yet *at the same time* his Son, as was *before affirmed?*[1] Is He not then truly the Son of the living God who has come in the flesh; and is not the throne of David promised to Him something different from what you would understand it, a spiritual kingdom of heaven which He will set up and govern from above (when ye shall have *exalted* Him)? Is He not *man and God?* And (which in the final sense and aim of all this is meant to be indicated) *must* not the promised Redeemer be this in order to *redeem* you from the curse of the law?" (Rom. viii. 3, 4.) Thus, in this last answer, does our Lord reach far beyond into future developments and fulfilments, while He here already lays down at least the same testimony concerning His person which He afterwards declared upon adjuration before Caiaphas.[2]

[1] For thus far indeed Hofmann (who, in other respects, perverts the Psalm and Christ's question founded upon it) sees the truth which lies clearly on the surface, and needlessly appeals in support of this to what Gerhard says: "that these words treat not (merely absolutely) of the Divinity of Christ, but of the taking of His *human* nature into fellowship with the *Divine* subsistence." (Weiss. u. Erf. ii. 195.)

[2] With a folly to *us* almost incomprehensible, or comprehensible only when viewed as the punishment of the rejection of the Scripture, the acute Schleiermacher passes by this dogmatical point, and so wrests the words as to make our Lord mean simply that He could furnish them with something to answer that would be embarrassing for the *Romans*. "As *they* interpreted the psalm *Messianically*, they could not answer otherwise than:—David might call the Messiah at the same time *his Lord*, *because* this was to be a *far mightier King* than he himself was." Apart from the notorious accommodation to the exegesis of that time, as well as its being unworthy of Christ "that he should have proposed any question only in order to embarrass" (as even Neander says here)—is there sense and understanding in the idea, that any one should call a future greater king than himself, therefore *his* Lord?

Hosted by Google

In truth, only the faith which, in the same Spirit by which David prophesied, calls Jesus Lord, and recognises the God-man in Him, can solve the enigma of the being of this Son of Man, and find the salvation and the righteousness which the law cannot give. *What think ye of Christ?* This has ever been since then "the vital question of the ages;" he who does not ask it has it ever anew proposed to him by Him who is Himself the answer. This is the heart-question, the life-question that decides all; avoid this question and deny the answer, if thou wouldst one day become a footstool with the enemies! "Yes, if it could be said, pointing to Moses, Here is a greater than Christ! and pointing to the law, The office of the letter which kills and condemns has greater clearness than the office of the New Testament in Christ, which gives the spirit and preaches righteousness!—if it could be said, The Law has given Christ, the law is the end of Christ, the fulfilment of the Gospel, by the works of the law is man made just before God—then might one give the first place to the question,—Which is the principal commandment in the Law?"[1] But, because Christ alone makes truly alive by the Spirit those who are dead, and pours His love wherewith He has loved us, the love of God, into the heart, in order to the fulfilment of the commandments which have become new in Him;—therefore it remains that He, as the Son of God, who as man has redeemed us and as God sits at God's right hand, now and at the last day should make the great separation and decision between His right hand and His left. "If ye hate Me—there is sure condemnation for all My enemies. If ye love Me—then keep My commandments!" (John xiv. 15, where Christ takes the place of Jehovah, Ex. xx. 6; comp. John xvi. 23.)

Thus has our Lord left to us the fundamental article of the simplest *catechism* in Law and Gospel, as His last *doctrine* according to the *Scripture;* thus has He confirmed and repeated the two fundamental ideas of the Sermon on the Mount, namely, the *requirement* of a better righteousness than that of the Pharisees in the spiritual fulfilling of the Law, and the *promise* that He is come as the alone Fulfiller. The Pharisees contradict both, do not repent in presence of the law, and do not believe on

[1] Friedensbote, 1822. S. 130.

Hosted by Google

Christ; therefore follows the now thoroughly prepared *woes* denounced against them, chap. xxiii.

But before proceeding to this we must be allowed a short and unavoidable digression, suggested by the ἐν πνεύματι! which we have reserved till now against the γραμματεῖς of the present day! Our Lord presupposes, as at that time generally acknowledged by the Scribes, and *confirmed* by His own recognition, that David, in the cx. Psalm, speaks of his Son, the future *Christ;* in like manner He takes for granted as a thing acknowledged the *Divine inspiration* of the Psalm, so that He can build the proof-question upon it. His ἐν πνεύματι, or, as St Mark has it, ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ, is none other than the רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ in the *Jewish theory of inspiration;* this is solemnly acknowledged by Him, and taken for granted as a common *truth* between Him and His enemies, and it therefore (although by ignorance reproached as *Jewish)* must remain also as thoroughly the Christian idea of inspiration. For it is that of Christ Himself. He does not here declare it as something new that David speaks and prophesies in the Spirit only *in this Psalm;* but He presupposes, with His opponents, the same prophesying by the Spirit throughout the entire βίβλος ψαλμῶν (Luke xx. 42, comp. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1, 2)—nay, as shortly before, throughout all the γραφαῖς. Here then is the *sedes doctrinae de inspiratione* according to *the* Teacher, whose authority exceeds that of all the Rabbins of that day, and all the doctors of this: what He here calls πνεῦμα is the δύναμις τοῦ θεοῦ before ascribed to the Jewish Scriptures. And can we, His disciples, call ourselves Christians, and Christian theologians, if we treat the Old Testament humanly, if we shun the offence of the prophecies in Him now, as the Jews did that of the cross? We are called Christians, and so long as in this the name Christ and Christianity yet lives, it points us ever back again to the Old Testament. The dogmatical question, What think ye of *Jesus?* becomes, when it enters into the *true* "Christian consciousness," one with the exegetical question which stands here, What think ye of *Christ!* For Jesus has said, I am *this* Christ! The Apostles preached that He is the Christ. Only on the *corner-stone* of the Apostles and *Prophets* is "the Church," together with its true consciousness, built. A Schleiermacherian theology without the Old Testament

Hosted by Google

wants the ground-stone and cope-stone, so long as it does not go beyond itself.

The *idea of inspiration*, in its strictness and purity as attesting itself by the *Scripture* (the one Scripture of the Old and New Testaments in common), is a *fundamental* idea of theology; and not until theology has again completely recovered this idea, now unhappily almost lost, can it again be a truly Christian and Bible theology, both these being one. Not until the improper admissions and concessions even of believers on this decisive question come to an end, will their position, as opposed to the negative theologians, assume a fixed and decided form. It is, indeed, not agreeable to the present writer, "properly speaking to stand alone in an age,"—as long ago Umbreit said of me, and recently Dr Tholuck to the same effect—though it is even now *almost* true; yet, on the other hand, it is consolation enough to stand with Christ and His Apostles. It may be that my Scriptural writings are for a while longer "to have the fate of being more rejected than examined."[1] But this cannot possibly last long; for the fearfully consistent opposition of those who are entirely unbelievers will drive the orthodox, even for the sake of a like *consistency*, into the true stronghold, into the Scripture and power of God, which alone is impregnable to the Sadducees.

The inspiration, in the more limited sense, belonging to the Scripture, which is to be distinguished from the Spirit in the thinking and life of the Apostles and Prophets in general—this *inspiration*, properly so-called, we stedfastly maintain, and without it we know and acknowledge no Scripture. The theory of the orthodox school which has appeared since Calov and Quenstedt may on one side be very defective, inasmuch as, contrary to the evidence which science has now discovered, it sets aside human co-operation by the supposition of human passivity; but, on the other side, in as far as it sets up a specific difference between *revelatio* and *inspiratio*, it is most incontro-

[1] As yet, I am sorry to say, almost as much as possible ignored by the theologians of the chair; so that many pass through their studies and yet hear very little of me (or besides of J. F. v. Meyer, the great master of exegesis). A *different* class of readers, however, who are not ungrateful to me, is happily on the increase.

Hosted by Google

vertibly right. He who denies this has to do neither with Calov and Quenstedt, nor with v. Meyer and Stier, but with the Lord Christ and all His Apostles, not to say all the fathers and teachers of the Church from the beginning. Of Dr Hahn's 24th paragraph in his text-book of the Christian faith, for example, an exact refutation may be found in Justin, Irenaeus, Origen, Augustine, etc., etc.;[1] apart from the fact that the proposition there laid down, to the effect that revelation and inspiration are *according to the Scripture* in substance not at all different, declares what is entirely false. The revelation and institution of the old covenant is not merely to be regarded as what generally speaking obtained and subsisted in Israel, not a spurious "Hebraism," which in a merely natural way accommodated itself to the historical development of the people; but it was specifically given and ordained by God through His servants for this people. More particularly, the ground of the canonical authority and supernatural import of their Scriptures is not what the Spirit of God wrought in general in these men, but what the Spirit in particular gave to them to write. David was not always "in Spirit" in the same sense as when he sang prophetic psalms. That their exalted activity, their being in the Spirit while composing these testimonies, stands connected with their whole general life in the Spirit is certain; and it is conformable with the psychological law of the operation of the Spirit of God in the human spirit. The one is as regards the other not a thing of indifference, for indeed they were *holy men of God*—but this is not yet *one and the same* with being specially *moved* by the Holy Ghost, ὑπὸ πνεύματοι, ἁγίου φερόμενοι (2 Pet. i. 21); this latter belongs specially to the ἐλάλησαν, *i.e.*, according to the clear meaning of the Apostle, equivalent to ἔγραψαν. For to read here, "As the holy men *spake* so also they wrote"—is certainly an exegesis which thwarts the entire connection with other passages; for see Jam. iii. 2. Did, then, those imperfect men who offended in word commit mistakes also in their writings? And who will judge as to these errors? The Spirit in us, which we have in

[1] And possibly very different from Tholuck's review in the new "Deutsche Zeitschrift," which makes short work of the subject. How many strong and decisive statements are there, too, against those friends of the truth who still speak sometimes obscurely and with wavering concessions!

Hosted by Google

higher measure in order to this? Where, then, remains the idea of the κανών;[1] which yet Nitzsch, for example, holds fast, although his affirmation, that infallibility belongs only to the whole as such, seems meant by him as going even beyond the truth? So long as I can read and think, nothing will move me from the conviction, that our Lord ascribes an infallibility to the *single* γέγραπται as such, and that *because* it is a γέγραπται.[2] Christ, when He says Δαυὶδ ἐν πνεύματι, does not mean to say that David was *always* in the Spirit, but He certainly means that *his psalms* were written in the Spirit; again He means this, not merely of the Psalter as a whole, but, of the most special אֲדֹנִי and שֵׁב לִימִינִי, which stands in the 110th Psalm. The true theory of inspiration must, therefore, stand fast in that centre, from which in the New Testament the immovable word ἡ γραφή sounds forth; and in the mouth of Christ every γέγραπται receives its own Ἀμήν. And because the New Testament, as the completion of the Scripture, plainly puts itself on the same level of authority with that which it has before ascribed to the old Scripture (this every word breathes and expresses without special dicta, which, moreover, are not wanting)—so also is a special inspiration of *that which is written* here in like manner the only true conclusion. Although so many believing theologians still reject this, and (as for example Lange) declare the supposed "abstraction, whereby the inspiration of the writing is *separated* from the inspiration of the life" (but who is for making this separation?) to be "somewhat Talmudistic"—we yet know assuredly, and shall never grow weary of asserting, that all rejection of the specific miracle maintained in the γέγραπται is only to be wise above and against Scripture.

With respect now to *prophecy* in particular, the *substance* or *matter* of all prophecy in the Old Testament is that which God has determined, by the revelation of His Son, to accomplish in the

[1] Nullo modo posset Scriptura sacra pro regula vitae ac fidei haberi, si scriptores sacri non alia gavisi fuissent θεοπνευστίᾳ, cum homines etiam pii et sancti falli queant variisque erroribus sint obnoxii. Buddæus Institutt. i. 2, 10.

[2] Against Hoffmann, who, in his "Schriftbeweis" (i. 567 s.), will only admit the validity of the Scripture as a whole, according to its collective import, there remains this very serious question: What, then, is to be made of the special γέγραπται—?

Hosted by Google

days of the new covenant, in the time of the fulfilment, or אַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים, and which therefore He announced beforehand in the time of preparation. (Acts iii. 24.) As the life of faith in the pious had, from the very first, no ground on which to rest without some expectation of eternal life with their God, in like manner all the temporal, provisional leadings and institutions of God, with reference to His people, have no δύναμις and no τέλος without the all-pervading reference to the coming of Christ. The looking forward to the coming of the seed of the woman, of the seed of Abraham for the blessing of all nations, of the Shiloh unto whom the obedience of the nations is due, of the Son of David who is to build the Temple and Kingdom for ever, of the Messiah, is, in a certain sense, one with the looking forward to the advent in general, as is rightly denoted by the *Jewish* theological עוֹלָם הַבָּא. This reference and annunciation consists, however, *partly* in the inner meaning and spirit of all the events and institutions in general, corresponding to the mind and character of the people, partly in *special testimonies* given from time to time. The latter, which is still to be distinguished, for example, from the true writing of history by the נְבִיאִים רִאשׁוֹנִים, is prophecy in the more limited sense. And what is the *aim* of these special vaticinia which *announce beforehand*, through the succession of ages in regular development, and precede, like their shadows beforehand, all the events of God's hand, but especially, with constant reference to Israel's election, progress, and destiny, the kingdom of Christ, and *the history of His person*, on which it is founded? In the first place, to strengthen and call forth the expecting faith of that time; to ward off a false resting in what was merely temporary; and graciously to hold forth a pledge of the knowledge of Him who was to come. Both those who immediately received these oracles of God (Ps. cx. נְאֻם יְהוָה), and those to whom they were further communicated, were, with anxious longing, to search into their meaning; for prophecy arose to satisfy this longing awakened within them *by God*, and did not arise in a natural way *out of* that longing itself (see Dan. ix.). The *principal aim* of prophecy, however, extended far beyond that imperfect understanding of its meaning which, even with the accompanying private interpretation of the Spirit, alone was possible, to the Advent itself. That Israel

Hosted by Google

might certainly know the Messiah when He came, if only they would; that Christ Himself, as a man and an Israelite, might have a light for His path, a means of developing and confirming His faith, prepared by the Father;[1] that the believers of the New Testament might henceforth, in like manner, through the wondrous word of ages, fortify their faith in the unity of all revelations of God, even to the last in His Son, their certainty that He to whom they live is the one that was to come in the fulness of time, according to eternal counsel; *finally*, that in the last days the ancient covenant-people, returning from their blindness, might be convinced by its holy letter preserved even till that time:—all this is included in the design of prophecy.

The *source*, from which the predictions of the prophets in the more limited sense proceeded, is *not* to be found in the ἰδία ἐπίλυσις of a presentiment, conjecture or desire, which, although at first awakened within them by the Spirit of God, was yet further developed in themselves in a natural and human way. But it must be sought in the *speaking of God*, His word coming always *anew* into their human consciousness,—which, even to the end of the days, when every *mystery* of God thus spoken is fulfilled and ended (Rev. x. 7) might and was *intended to be* partly understood, and partly not *understood;* and which, precisely on this account, clothed itself partly in literally plain words, in words entirely understood by the prophets, partly, on the other hand, in dark hints, and in an *under-sense*, which only the Spirit of God Himself knew and could interpret. The *Spirit of Christ*, as St Peter says, was in the prophets, so that they must needs search into the words of their own mouth, and, on account of the darkness that hid other things, only abide by what had been revealed to them, namely, *that not unto themselves, but unto us, they did minister these things* (1 Pet. i. 10–12). But, because the word of the Spirit was yet a word coming through the mouth of men and the thoughts of men, therefore was the knowledge of these holy men themselves the *medium* of utterance employed by the Spirit; and that in a manner quite as conformable to nature as

[1] And yet there are those who venture openly to impute to Him a Jewish, and, on account of His humanity, national sphere of vision, in the belief and the understanding of the Scripture;—to *Him* who first brought to Israel and the world the full belief, the entire, true understanding of the Scripture.

Hosted by Google

it was miraculous. Every Prophet speaks what is given to him; far as it may reach beyond his time, it yet as a whole bears the peculiar form of his time and person, which the same God, by the course of nature and grace, has wisely prepared with a view to this. The Prophet says, indeed, many things which he himself does *not altogether* understand, but nothing in regard to which he has no thoughts or reflections at all, and which is not in some way connected with his own consciousness. And thus, according to *this* theory of inspiration, the prophetic writings are truly "organic wholes, and living products of minds affected by the surrounding external and internal relations"—(in the words of Bleek)—if only we reckon among these internal relations the Spirit of inspiration very essentially *affecting* the mind.

The *Christ* of prophecy, about whom our Lord in the words περὶ τοῦ Χριστοῦ asks, as concerning a *person* who is the same with His person (Luke xxiv. 26, τὸν Χριστόν, and ver. 44, περὶ ἐμοῦ), is a figure and form which is complete and consistent in its totality.[1] It is not, therefore, that (one knows not what) "ideal" Christ who is made up of all sorts of presentiments, half agreeing and half disagreeing with each other, such as many at this day speak of. These, indeed, have also a kind of "prophecy;" the idea of which, however, does not at all agree with the idea of this word that obtains elsewhere among Heathens, Jews, and Christians, namely, "a foretelling of events, based on Divine communication" (see also Acts xi. 28, xxi. 11). Scriptural *prophecy* in this sense, in so far as it stands in the canon, is a product of a higher degree of inspiration, and its most evident proof; just as that "prophesying," or inspired speaking in another sense, which the Scripture speaks of, indicates a concentrated and stronger working of the Spirit of God on the human spirit. It is nothing to

[1] "Christ, the promised One, everywhere explains the Old Testament in the most essential respects of Himself, and applies it to His own person, just as a man points to a picture which represents him." V. Meyer, as editor of De Wette's Psalms, see Krit. Kränze, p. 396. Yet, as may be strictly proved by a genuine exegesis of the prophetical word, what Jul. Müller maintains is wrong, viz., "that the Messianic prophecy of the Old Covenant respecting the incarnate Son of God was fulfilled, but at the same time *infinitely exceeded.*" The fulfilled reality indeed exceeds the prophecy in clearness; in other respects, however—if only one reads now in this clearness—it has *nothing* essential, which had not been already indicated beforehand.

Hosted by Google

the purpose that, in the original language of the Old Testament, there is no special term for the foretelling of the future. It has the thing itself, and the appeal of the true God to it as coming only from Him; and that precisely where this prophesying appears more strikingly than it had ever done before, in *Isaiah*, for example, chaps. xlii. 8, 9, xlvi. 9, 10, which therefore the present false theory can no longer believe and understand. By right no one should give to a *presentiment* of the future, developed from the *human* spirit—*præsagium*—the name of a prophecy or *vaticinium*, in the theological sense. On the other hand, this name is without doubt rightly applied to an intuition given in *the first place* in the natural horizon of the present, and the sphere of the national life, to which, through the *providence of God*, a *typical character*, flowing from the general character, adheres: *namely*, when this Providence, specially taking care of the canon, has *before provided* the *expression* of this intuition in the γραφή, and has, precisely by inspiration, given it a co-ordinate place with the more consciously direct prophecies. That the human consciousness of its meaning does not essentially belong to the idea of prophecy according to the more concrete use of the word in the New Testament, but that, all the more on this account, the idea of a Divine guidance and inspiration belongs to it, is evident from the case of Caiaphas. (John xi. 50, 51.) But the holy men of God were far from prophesying always unconsciously, and they never did so strictly speaking as Caiaphas did. This leads us into a province where the believing interpretation has been mainly combated and charged with the worst caprice,—into the miraculous province of that which the Holy Ghost speaks, while the persons by whom He speaks do not fully understand it. Here "the difference between the immediate and the mediate, between the unconscious and the conscious in the human spirit," as psychology shows what is analogous to it everywhere, is, at all events in the province of the Scripture, to be well considered and rightly understood. If too great emphasis is laid on the unconsciousness—then, forgetting the Scripture-inspiration, one finds only such "presentiments as the pious writers themselves were not able to master, were not able clearly and entirely to express, scarcely even to stammer out." This, then, is held "from its very nature, to be ever something general, indefinite, floating in

Hosted by Google

the air;" and so the testimony of the prophetic Spirit adduced in the New Testament as in the highest degree clear, must be allowed to evaporate into an incomprehensible chiaro-oscuro, the exegesis of which is forbidden to every one. On the contrary, all that the *Holy Ghost*—so soon as we attach a definite meaning to this great word itself—has given to the sacred writers to say, remains most certain and definite, whether this be simply and plainly in their words, as information destined for the Old Testament, or whether it be an enigma lying deeper, reserved for the future. In the latter case, what is concealed becomes manifest, and the slight intimation, according to its original Divine *intention*, is exalted into the light of distinct definiteness; *i.e.*, in other words, the Scripture is *opened* (Acts xvii. 3; Luke xxiv. 45), so soon as *the same Spirit*, who there spake mysteriously, now becomes the *interpreter of His own words*. We see, also, that Christ and the Apostles cite and make use of such hyponoetic testimonies, without distinction from the others. "The formula ἵνα πληρωθῇ is frequently applied to types *the same as if* they were prophecies,"—says Nitzsch; from this it precisely follows, however, that they *are* prophecies, and the consciously prophesying subject is properly always in the end the Holy Ghost. As regards the *under-sense*, also, there is in it no essential token of its having been unknown to the inspired writer; this may certainly have been the case, but it may quite as well have been the contrary.[1] Only the man who holds no special inspiration will anxiously inquire what, and how much, the writers had in their own thoughts in connection with their words—*a question which can now never be settled*. We should think that when such a one reads honestly and uprightly the wondrous word of the Old Testament, he must find so much that is uncertain, obscure, and full of presentiment, so much that is invested and played around by a second sense, as to make him despair of at all interpreting the thoughts in these words. But he who proposes the grand question, What does the Holy Ghost testify here? considers, indeed, the historically personal references and media in the human consciousness, in so far as they present themselves to him; where, however, the word, read in the light of the fundamental intention and special interpretation of the

[1] See my Einleitung zu den Psalmen p. 8.

Hosted by Google

New Testament, begins to loose itself from the natural ground of the time when it was written, he, notwithstanding, continues to read confidently without troubling himself much as to what the prophet may or may not have understood concerning it. We have now to do not merely with "the *train of thought* of the ancient kings, prophets, and other *mere* (?) theopneusts"—in which the person, history, and kingdom of Christ were already comprehended in extenso and concreto (Tholuck's Litt. Anz. 1836, 181) —but with the train of thought of the Spirit, according to which David speaks *in the Spirit*, or *the Holy Spirit by the mouth of David*. We "bring certainly the full colouring into the shadowy sketch"—for, therefore, has the σκιὰ τῶν μελλόντων been given to us, in its wonderful adaptation to the εἰκών; he who has the original sees, of course, a true shadow-sketch in the light of this original, and *this is precisely now the exegesis of the Old Testament in the light of the New*. Moreover, we must not suffer ourselves to be induced to take, as the criterion, whatever it may please a false theology, which does not even understand the Old Testament in a grammatico-historical way, to declare, as at any time the stage in the development of Hebraism on the whole, and, therefore, as the sphere of vision at the time in the particulars. It is, for example, a mere dogmatical dictum of unbelief which will not acknowledge the "inner relations," when De Wette[1] says respecting the *piercing* of the hands and feet in Ps. xxii., attested by the Masora, "If David did not suffer it, then he *could* not say it of *himself*, and a presentiment of the particular mode of death which *another* was to suffer after him could not with these words come into his mind." Wherefore not, if it was revealed to him that not only his life and sufferings bore a typical reference to the great One who was to come; but also, in particular, that the Spirit of the Lord spake of this One by his tongue? Why must that be called "unpsychological" in the highest and holiest sphere which, in a quite inferior degree, happens to the sons of men—even to many a Doctor, in spite of all his exact thinking—namely, that they should often say what reaches beyond their own thought. It would be interesting enough to seek out in many a book of the present day the under-sense here and there put in by God.

[1] Erbauliche Erklärung zu den Psalmen p. 29.

Hosted by Google

Goschel's exegesis in reference to Goethe goes, indeed, too far; in general, however, we all apply with justice the *same* principle of interpretation even to our own classics. And, to return to antiquity:—one has only to look without prejudice at the wide natural sphere of the heathen oracles, and the oriental gnome-wisdom, in order to find in abundance even the grammatical double sense (this σκάνδαλον of the γραφή). Now that the wondrous word of the suggesting Spirit, employing and exalting *this* mode of natural utterance amongst men, comes to have, not, indeed, a "*spirit-like*" (as the Reviewer in Tholuck's Anz. loc. cit. thinks), yet actually a *supernatural, miraculous* appearance, is at the same time founded so *naturally* in the fact of the great miracle of inspiration,[1] that not only in the citations of the New Testament does what is cited acquire for the most part exactly this appearance, but in general to the believingly devout reader *every sentence of the Bible* is at times thus spiritually transfigured. Thus is that *interpretation* of the Scripture which completely understands it, properly speaking itself a prophesying and seeing by the Spirit, and not a *mere* reading and investigating by means of human helps, as in other books written by men. Such interpretation, like all prophecy of the second degree, lets itself indeed be *judged* by the same Spirit, on account of the error that is mixed with it, but it must certainly decline to vindicate itself against merely human wrangling and disputation.

What, then, did David in Ps. cx. know of Christ, when, *in the Spirit*, he called him *his* Lord? This Lord Himself, who also knew well about David, asserts, on the part of the Psalmist, a knowledge of the sense of his own words, in the little word "*his*" —which is, at all events, implied in the expression "to *my* Lord," as has been said above. As Moses, according to Num. xii. 6–8, had some understanding of the secret and far-reaching import of his typical laws and institutions, so, still more, did David *know*, since Nathan's prophecy, that he himself, also a prophet, spake beforehand, for example in Ps. xvi., of the *resurrection* of

[1] For the inspiration of the Scripture is, and remains the *miracle* in the sphere of human thinking, quite as indisputable, and at the same time incomprehensible, as other wonders of a higher imparting itself to a lower nature. In this way it touches upon what is analogous to it in a lower degree, and is yet, toto cœlo, different from it.

Hosted by Google

this Christ who was promised to him. (Acts ii. 30, 31.) In like manner, in the 2d Psalm, he speaks of a world-ruler who is "the Son" in an incomparable sense, in whom to *trust* for salvation as in God is no idolatry. He knew even that the Spirit of God speaks in his psalms in general of Him who was to come. Read only 1 Chron. xviii. 17, and 2 Sam. vii. 19, aright as the words stand.[1] Consequently the ἐν πνεύματι, in

[1] True, even the old translators take the אדני יהוה in 2 Sam. vii. 19, as a Vocative; but, although this certainly occurs at vers. 18, 19, 20, 28, 29, it yet cannot be meant thus here (the second time in the same verse!), because then the remaining clause וזאת תורת האדם would have no proper beginning. When Hävernick, with Schnurrer and others, would read, "that such is a law for men" (as Seb. Schmid, idque ad legem homines) —we reasonably ask, in respect of the sense, What? how so? and can find no tolerable idea corresponding to the elevation of this chapter. Equally unsatisfactorily does De Wette dismiss the readers of his Bible, "Such is the way of men"—namely, to speak thus confidentially (as according to Grot. also Gesenius, Winer, Maurer), or even, Thus to care for their posterity! Zinzendorf, in his ignorance, may be satisfied with such an interpretation as, "Thou speakest with one, as a friend speaks with another" —but we cannot be so satisfied. The *question* of surprise, Is this the manner of men (namely, an eternal kingdom)? comes indeed nearer, but no such question is indicated in the text. It is enough to abide by that which Luther has hit in his marginal gloss: "Thou speakest with me of an eternal kingdom, in which no man can be king; He must be God *and man*, because He is to be my son and yet is to be king for ever and ever, which belongs to God alone." This future, as yet distantly future, Ruler of an eternal kingdom, whose Father (ver. 14) thou art to be, is God-Man! Thus we have the true parallel to Ps. cx. Let תורה be understood of the new law, the new revelation, the new order of the covenant and kingdom; let the האדם which is strikingly brought into prominence, and used personally, contrary to the usage of this word elsewhere, not be overlooked; and then let the passage be read in full (with Schmieder, Zeugniss von Christo in Predigten, p. 291),—Of *an* Adam, who is Lord Jehovah, a new beginner of humanity and representative of humanity. If any one thinks that this interpretation of 2 Sam. vii. is mystically put into the words, we ask him how he will dispose of the parallel passage 2 Chron. xviii. 17 (original text xvii. 17), where the sense maintained by us is still less to be evaded; it means evidently, according to the manner, form (the type) of the or a *man*, *who is on high*, who is Lord (and) God. The interpretation, "After the manner of an exalted man"—yields still less sense than the evasions before mentioned. Or, "After the manner of men, O Thou on high, God Jehovah"—which is already forbidden by the remarkable accentuation.

Hosted by Google

Ps. cx., does not, in any wise, mean a state of ecstasy in which David himself was carried to the right hand of God, and in which, not knowing the import of his own words, he speaks as if he himself had become his own Lord. Nor are the words "to *my* Lord" to be understood as "an Israelite's intuition of the glorious and efficacious fellowship of the king with Jehovah," *i.e.*, in another person than his own, as Hofmann thinks; for, on the contrary, Christ[1] here says that David spake these words in his own person, concerning another, viz., *the Christ*. Although it is not thereby affirmed that David knew and understood *all* that we can read and find in the inexhaustibly profound word of the Spirit by the mouth of David, now after the actual exaltation of the royal Priest to the right hand of God.

WOE TO THE PHARISEES. ALL BLOOD UPON THIS GENERATION. FAREWELL TO JERUSALEM.

Matt. xxiii. 2–39; Mark xii. 38–40; Luke xx. 46, 47. (Luke xi. 39–52; xiii. 34, 35.)

We must once more, and for the last time, protest against the constant hypothesis of Olshausen, who consistently maintains the improbability that an entire discourse, such as St Matthew gives here, was actually spoken by our Lord; and, moving in a *circle*, reminds us, here as everywhere else, of the usual manner of the Apostles "thus to combine the sayings of Christ." We still maintain the same conviction as to the theory

[1] To whom Dr Hofmann will hardly answer: "*Thou errest*, for thou knowest not the Scripture and the weakness of men so well as I!" We are glad to find Delitzsch at one with us in the testimony that the authority of Christ (from which Hofmann tries acutely, but in vain, to release himself) here recognises a designation of the Messiah as κύριος in the mouth of *David*. Thereby certainly "the chain of progression, as Hofmann has constructed it, is at once broken in pieces, the *exclusively* typical principle of his interpretation of the Psalms entirely shaken." (Delitzsch Biblisch-prophet. Theologie, p. 186.)

Hosted by Google

that St Matthew has "with art and insight arranged into a new whole" the scattered sayings; we hold it to be an art forbidden to the Evangelist, a false insight on the part of the Apostle, who must have known that it was not permitted to him to compile for the Church of Christ the formal discourses delivered by his and its Lord on His entering upon His work and taking leave of it, and then simply to say of them: Jesus opened His mouth and spake thus! The Τότε of St Matthew, therefore, stands firm here also; as much so, at least, as the account of St Luke, who informs us that Jesus had already spoken at an earlier period much of what is said here. Nay, St Luke himself, as also St Mark, at the same place where the discourse of St Matthew stands, gives a brief notification of that discourse. When St Luke, chap. xi. vers. 38, 45, 53, narrating exactly according to the occasion and connection there indicated, inserts the earlier kindred discourse of our Lord against the Pharisees and Scribes, it is *to us* not merely in the highest degree probable, but certain, that he is quite as right as St Matthew, and St Matthew quite as right as he:—that is, our Lord (and this has a very profound significance, if only we will admit it) publicly repeated and arranged in this, His farewell discourse, what He had already, perhaps often, here and there uttered in private.[1] At least let tenable reasons be given against this, instead of an indefinite assertion of its improbability. Was not the case entirely similar with the parable of the guests who despised the call? We shall, therefore, interpret the discourse spoken at the entertainment in St Luke as belonging properly to that time; yet we shall there, for the most part, have to consider and explain only the different position and connection of the particular sayings in relation to the concluding discourse in St Matthew.

But we must not forget that even the formal apostrophe to Jerusalem as the killer of the prophets, and the announcement, "Your house is left unto you desolate! Ye shall see me no more!"—to remove which from its place in St Matthew would

[1] Even Hase acknowledges this discourse as authentic, and thinks it to be "so conformable to time and place that it by no means has the appearance of being a compilation of Matthew." Schleiermacher, on the contrary, thinks that on this day there was no longer *time* enough for such a discourse.

Hosted by Google

contradict all sound feeling—is likewise to be found at an earlier period in Luke xiii. 34, 35, in definite connection with a word going before, at ver. 33. What shall we say to this? It certainly bears very much the appearance as if Christ had spoken thus only once, and that most naturally where St Matthew records it; nay, we cannot quite comprehend Olshausen, when, with obstinate consistency, he curtly says of these words, "In St Luke *they* have *without doubt* their original place!" How natural is it to doubt whether Jesus could there and then from afar have thus addressed *Jerusalem;* whether He could already have addressed a *farewell* to those who *would not!* When we find that St Luke has, without regard to chronological order, interwoven with the so-called narrative of the journey (*i.e.*, the particular section chap. ix. 51, to chap. xviii. 14) much that was spoken elsewhere,—for example as we found at chap. xi. 14–36 (yet only so as that ver. 37 retains its truth in so far as something similar was then said), and perhaps chap. xiii. 18–21, as also other places,—it is surely natural to suppose that in connecting also chap. xiii. 34, 35 with ver. 33, he *might* have anticipated. More than this, however, it does not become us to say; as even Schleiermacher, in his lectures on St Luke (as my notes inform me), "could not do otherwise than let it stand as *doubtful*."[1] It is at least much more certain that St Matthew is right in giving this as Christ's *farewell word;* and our feeling, sound and true as we think, rebels against the idea that he has presumed, on his own authority, to remove the earlier saying to this place where Christ *would have* spoken it beyond comparison more suitably and effectually. When again, however, we find that in Luke xiii. the words may be well understood (even ver. 35) in *another*, and at that time quite suitable, sense (of which later on St Luke), if we only cancel the already critically suspicious ἔρημος—we can make up our minds to suppose, with Bengel, that our Lord had already, at an earlier period in Galilee, addressed in precisely similar terms Jerusalem, the murderer of the prophets, when speaking of His death which was soon to be accomplished there; and, finally, that at a later period He purposely repeated, with reference to a more remote future, a word

[1] In the *published work* on St Luke he inclines still more strongly to the opinion, that St Luke has only inserted the discourse here.

Hosted by Google

that was there meant for His triumphal entry which was soon to take place.

But to proceed with St Matthew. According to his account, our Lord spake here *to the people and to His disciples*, notwithstanding the address to the Pharisees and Scribes and the entire evil generation, which begins at ver. 13 and continues to the end of the chapter. This implies, first of all, that He *began* as we see by addressing the people (ver. 3), and His disciples (ver. 8–11); but then it is meant to denote, that in fact the woes denounced against the Pharisees were meant less for them than as a warning for the people and the disciples. Mark xii. 38 brings into prominence the still listening and unsusceptible people; Luke xx. 45, in addition to these, the disciples. Both Evangelists, moreover, not less concisely than profoundly, intimate this as the proper and innermost point of the entire discourse, when they begin it with a Βλέπετε, προσέχετε ἀπὸ τῶν γραμματέων. This connects itself (besides Matt. xvi. 6, and Luke xii. 1) exactly with the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. vii. 15)—that Sermon on the Mount which (as we have there seen) foreshadows in general, in its progress and conclusion, the progress and conclusion of all the teaching of Christ; to which, in particular (as we shall see), the woes here denounced significantly correspond, as contrasting with the blessings there promised. The sentence of condemnation which the Pharisees, *in the hearing of all the people*, must needs take away with them,—so that by this publicity it already foreshadows to them the great judgment of that day,—is meant to exhibit a most solemn *warning example* for all future times to the eyes of all the people, and especially the disciples of Christ (*i.e.*, as in the Sermon on the Mount, such as are so already, and such as on hearing it will become so):—this is the main design and fundamental import of the entire discourse, *Let it not be so with you!* This must be said even here to the disciples of Christ; therefore, it is not merely, Beware of these and such hypocrites wherever you may meet them; but even, Take heed that *ye become not as they!* For, according to 1 Cor ix. 27, there remains

Hosted by Google

even to a Paul the threatening danger of continuing to preach outwardly to others whilst inwardly he is himself rejected, of holding forth the prize to which he himself does not attain.

As, at Is. v. 8–30, there followed upon the parable of the vineyard a sixfold woe against sinful Israel, so now, in exact contrast with the Sermon on the Mount (to which we shall find besides many particular allusions), Christ utters *seven* woes, with a superadded *eighth*, against the hypocrites and blind guides at the head of this generation upon which judgment is about to fall. This has not been arranged, here any more than there, by the "art and insight of the Evangelist." It would be folly, indeed, in us, as in St Matthew, to trouble ourselves with the question whether Christ spake every immaterial particular, and everything literally as it stands here; *e.g.*, whether He mentioned the φυλακτήρια first, and not the κράσπεδα. We may certainly rely on this, that the *whole*, in its essential meaning, connection, and progress, corresponds through the Spirit of inspiration with the original discourse of our Lord.

It divides itself not less evidently than significantly into *three* parts. The first gives, by way of introduction and warning, the *description* of the Scribes and Pharisees, and that in contrast with the disciples of Christ (vers. 2–12). The second, as the kernel, properly speaking, comprehends the *seven woes* upon the hypocrites and wilfully blind, which are introduced by a sudden change of the address (vers. 13–28). The *concluding* part passes, —in the *eighth woe*, which combines all the seven in one,—from the persons hitherto addressed to the *entire* generation of *Pharisaic Israel*, upon which judgment is about to fall; and ends in the terrible farewell to Jerusalem and the Temple, the city and habitation of God! (vers. 29–39). In harmony with chap. v. 20, in the Sermon on the Mount, the "righteousness" of the Pharisees—as it is there ironically called and rejected, that is, their unrighteousness and hypocrisy—is first of all depicted. "Those I mean, *who are so*"—says Christ, and thereby meets the question, which was yet a groundless question, viz., whether and how He can thus condemn the whole class and the whole sect. Those who are *not* so—He does not mean, and therefore does not condemn. He begins with the quite *general* mention of those who sit in Moses' seat (still, at the same time acknow-

Hosted by Google

ledging the right and truth of the *office*), whose word, in so far as it is conformable to that seat, is to be done by the *people*, notwithstanding that they themselves do it not. (Vers. 2, 3.) Thereby is already opened up the more special delineation of their character as it appears outwardly in *their works*, and that now in warning contrast with the *disciples of Christ*. They *do not* what they (more or less rightly) say; what they do however (their righteousness) is hypocrisy before the people. (Vers. 3–5.) Examples which make this manifest are to be found in their affectedly holy garments, their sitting in the upper seats, and their love of titles (vers. 5–7). Now comes the strongly convictive, specially corresponding antithesis, applied from what is outward to the internal character: *Be not ye so!* (vers. 8–10). But ye know what I have said to *you* (ver. 11), as also *to them and you together* (ver. 12). The last sentence, that namely of ver. 12, has comprehended both the Pharisees and the disciples at the close of the direct warning, and already prepared the way for the sentence of degradation upon those who sit on high, the *woe* that now breaks in.

The sevenfold woe divides itself into two parts; in the first of which there are four, and in the second three woes. The first four have respect to the pernicious *effects*, the last three to the evil *nature* of their hypocrisy.[1] They *rob* men of eternal salvation in the kingdom of heaven, under the pretext of being placed in charge of it—*nay even* of their earthly goods, under the pretext of making prayers for their souls[2] (vers. 13, 14). They give to men for this the destruction of hell, or a character

[1] By a similar division the promising *blessings* (Matt. v.) proceeded from the inward disposition to the outward expression; the rebuking *woe*, on the contrary, sets out from the outward expression, and proceeds to the inward character. The parallel, as *specially* carried out by Lange, between the blessings promised and the woes denounced, appears to us strained, and in some instances artificial. We think that such exact references would not accord with the solemnity of our Lord's holy wrath at the time.

[2] Ver. 14 is not to be put before ver. 13, for Bengel very aptly observes here, that the discourse must begin with the *kingdom of heaven* with reference to chaps. iv. 17, v. 3; we observe, in addition to this, that ver. 14 brings up a higher degree of turpitude in order to the *greater condemnation*. Still less is ver. 14 to be rejected as having been inserted from St Luke, as Grotius thought, for St Mark and St Luke have here retained this περισσότερον κρίμα, as the principal saying.

Hosted by Google

which deserves this (ver. 15)—and that by *false doctrine*, which (in every case as in these examples) puts what is unessential and outward in the place of what is essential (vers. 16–22). *Blind guides:* this sums up the pernicious outward expression of their hypocrisy, and stands therefore along with the "hypocrites" (ver. 23–25). Now first, pressing closely home, their evil *disposition* is denoted in a threefold woe: They neglect, in the most trifling outward observances, the principal thing (vers. 23, 24)—and that with *conscious* hypocrisy: as they cleanse the outside instead of the inside (vers. 25, 26), so they are themselves *whited sepulchres!* (vers. 27, 28.) The death in them which is now exposed forms the connecting link for the third and concluding part. This part, of course, again, begins in the first place with the Scribes and Pharisees, the guides of the whole people, in order to extend the eighth woe over *their* heads into a judgment upon the entire generation. They fill up with all their false holiness only the measure of the sins of their fathers: they pretend indeed to renounce the guilt of their fathers (vers. 29, 30), but yet are like them (ver. 31), nay fill up their measure in order to condemnation (vers. 32, 33). And thus does the entire generation fall with them into judgment; they will also reject the last messengers of Christ (sent *to them* only to afford a proof of their incorrigibleness), and thus draw down the final judgment upon all former crimes of bloodshed (vers. 34–36); chiefly Jerusalem would not receive the grace, which sought in vain to *allure* them, even to the last, and this grace now withdraws itself from them, *until* there shall be a penitent return of Israel to its *Messiah*, which lies in the remote future (vers. 37–39). Thus does the rejected Messiah turn away from them; thus does He declare the judgment beforehand; yet not without something conciliatory at the close, in the gracious look which He casts upon the children of these condemned parents, who shall one day be restored—everything in one comprehensive view of this people and generation, as one whole under the leading of God.

Vers. 2, 3. We are not to conceive of a *magisterial* power and dignity as belonging to the persons here rebuked; for our Lord uniformly showed an exalted humility towards all whose subject

Hosted by Google

He was, and, on the special ground of His own royal dignity, did not even make use of the right of the Prophet to rebuke and inveigh against the holders of power. He reprimands them not in so far as they had still in any way to *judge* and *rule;* therefore it is not the "High Priests and Scribes," so that it should be necessary to understand the Sanhedrim, but the "*Scribes* and Pharisees,"—the words being purposely in this order. Of "an organised *political* influence," which He would prevent the people from opposing in a revolutionary way, He does not speak here; He does not in the remotest way denote the school and sect, which indeed was then the dominant one, as the holders of the "collective *theocratical* power," not even in order to acknowledge that power. For καθέδρα is neither a θρόνος nor a βῆμα; but generally, the place which any one fills, and here the pulpit or desk in school and church, as we now say. To sit in the seat of any one is to occupy his place with its rights and prerogatives (see Sir. xii. 12 in the Greek); then to become his successor in office in so far as an office is spoken of; for a transference of a transferable office is certainly presupposed therein. But there was at this time in Israel no *seat* of the *prophets*, no outwardly constituted right of succession; for, Samuel's schools of the prophets existed for a time only by the Spirit, and even Elisha was not called by Elijah, but by the Lord through Elijah, just as Amos the herdsman was (Amos vii. 14, 15). There was, however, a *seat of Moses*, *i.e.*, an office with the right and duty belonging to it of declaring the law to the people, of enforcing it, and applying it to particular cases: this Moses did first of all in person (Ex. xviii. 13, 20), and transferred this power (which was then also a power to judge in cases where *the law* declared punishment) as to the rulers (ver. 21) who acted with him, so for the future to the Priests, and Levites, and Judges (Deut. xvii. 9–12). But our Lord cannot mean here even this *priestly* or *judicial* office proceeding from Moses (Mal. ii. 7; Deut. xxxiii. 10) as such, for times and things were changed since then; after the return from the captivity, since the time of Ezra, the first scribe or סֹפֵר, another seat had been set up for declaring and interpreting the law (Neh. viii. 4–9), namely, the pulpit in the synagogues, and the right of the instructed in general to teach the people. *This* Christ calls quite properly the present seat of

Hosted by Google

Moses, which the *school*, as we now say, had occupied; more particularly, however, the specific *sect* of the Pharisees, which had obtained the upper hand in the school, so that no Sadducæan *Scribes* were acknowledged, although Sadducees also sat in the high council. It matters nothing to the point, whether the Rabbis and teachers in the Temple and synagogues sate or stood (St Luke iv. 20); the ἐκάθισαν denotes the occupying of this place in general. As Christ at the beginning acknowledged the masters in Israel (Luke ii. 46; John iii. 10), so now, at the close, He lets their authority pass undisputed for the little while it has yet to last (till the judgment, ver. 12); He will not Himself thrust them down before the time, but let them sit as now they *sit*. Whether, moreover, the form ἐκάθισαν is intended to denote "that they were *self-elected* to their office"—they have by assumption seated themselves, and actually sit—is still a question; there is certainly something of this in the background, as afterwards ver. 12 comes into prominence. But at first our Lord seems to speak only in the way of *acknowledgment*, just as at chap. xxi. He acknowledged the keepers of the vineyard in order to rebuke them. For the order of the development from Moses downwards to the present time, notwithstanding all offence in the individuals, was yet, on the whole, true and legitimate: if there was a seat of Moses in Israel at all, who sate in it but the Pharisees? Although they may have arrogantly seated themselves and now sit (for example, they called the ignorant rabble John vii. 49, as עַם־הָאָרֶץ, their footstool), yet they were the real, and fundamentally, still orthodox representatives of legal Judaism; hence St Paul afterwards connecting himself with them could appeal to their influence. Inasmuch, therefore, as our Lord, leaving out of view the Sadducees and Essenes, speaks thus here of the Pharisees, He *honours* them (as in all His former controversy with them) at the same time that He rebukes them. "Notwithstanding His decided renunciation of what was dead and ungodly in Pharisaism, He yet had grafted His teaching only on their and on no other Jewish sect."

From this will be rightly understood the following confirmation by Christ of what these Pharisees *say* for the people, which from a want of clearness has been much misunderstood. That in the πάντα ὅσα ἄν their false human statutes, which make void

Hosted by Google

the commandment of God, are by no means to be included, is evident enough afterwards from vers. 16–22; and no one should so understand it after statements such as chap. xv. 3–20. What, in that case, would be meant by the προσέχετε, addressed to the people as well as to the disciples? "Christ commended the sheep because they listened not to the murderers and hirelings" —and can it be that He should now unconditionally direct them to these shepherds? Certainly, our Lord had, since the Sermon on the Mount, "placed the mass of the people above their representatives," and this is no "incongruous and revolutionary perversion of relations." It was the true reformatory relation, which Christ will assuredly never suffer to be abolished among the people of God, so as, after the genuine Romish fashion, to surrender the ignorant multitude blindly to human authorities. We cannot understand, again, how Olshausen, with the contents of this and the 15th chap. before him, can yet say here: "Their statutes contained in themselves nothing sinful; they were only very burdensome, but whoever entered into them faithfully and earnestly could receive no harm from them!" There lies, therefore, in the important οὖν between vers. 2 and 3 the already self-evident limitation, viz.: All that they say to you as in Moses' name from this seat, *conformably to this seat*, as true readers and interpreters of the law,[1]—"lest the people might think that the Pharisaic traditions were of equal validity with the precepts of Moses." Luther's marginal gloss runs: "If any one teaches otherwise and more than Moses, he sits not in Moses' seat; therefore Christ rejects afterwards *their* works and doctrine of men." This discriminating recognition furnished the true complement to all His controversy with them hitherto; and our Lord therefore now expresses it to prevent all misunderstanding

[1] This alone is what we find in it; namely, the acknowledgment of the office, and of all the teaching which was actually in accordance therewith. Roos, as if he had in his mind the pastors of his time, yet hardly according to historical truth, would understand a great deal too much. "From the *desk* these people say nothing wrong. Their human statutes, perverted interpretations, bad counsels, they spread abroad only in their decisions and conversations, or they bring them before their students in a learned shape. In the desk (in the pulpit) *all is as yet well enough*. There they are afraid. There God still keeps His hand over them!" We doubt very much whether it was so.

Hosted by Google

of His words (as in Matt. xv. 17). The people needed, and need at all times, in so far as the legal economy of God extends into the New Testament, such readers and interpreters of the word that has been given by God. Our Lord, therefore, at the same time, confirms by anticipation the similar office in Christendom; and declares it as His will that, in all times, the occupiers of any seat of Moses (not certainly a seat of Christ, who knows no representatives) should be honoured on account of the office, notwithstanding all personal unworthiness, just as parents and magistrates are to be honoured. Even although something human, unprophetical, pertaining to the letter in human fashion, should cleave to it (as Moses himself, at the same time, bore in the prophetical spirit the office of the letter), yet so long as it does not go directly *against* the word and commandment of God, it is to be tolerated,—but not further. What they tell you to *keep*, already with the gentle irony rightly expressed by Luther, "that *ye* should keep,"—as preparing the way for ver. 4. Yea, that observe and do *ye*, faithfully on your part, in order that it may not remain undone (see the like expressions Ex. xviii. 20; Deut. xvii. 10, 11), although they do it not themselves; but ye must not do according to *their* works! Here the τηρεῖν passes significantly to the inward disposition, which is different from the outward ποιεῖν, and first of all required;—also testified to by them against their knowledge and will in the word of the law, for it corresponds to the Heb. שׁמר.

Vers. 3, 4. They themselves continually *say* what the law says, but they *do it not:* this is the first all-embracing designation of their hypocrisy, a hypocrisy which is developed and intensified, according to psychological law, precisely by this saying and not doing. With this ver. 4 is immediately connected epexegetically; though by an almost universal mistake and in opposition to the plain word, these imposed burdens have been understood of their human statutes. It is only a figurative carrying out of ver. 3, according to the usage of the term (see on chap. xi. 29), and means nothing else than the saying and not doing spoken of immediately before: They proudly and with pleasure give forth the law in all its strictness, they delight to thunder it out severely, as from Sinai,—Thou shalt! thou shalt not! without ever thinking of their own obedience. (Rom. ii. 21–23.)

Hosted by Google

Just as the moral-Pharisees of the present day preach endlessly of duties and evermore of duties! They lay upon the shoulders of the poor people burdens which they themselves will not *touch* with *one* finger (Luke xi. 46), or move from the spot; not to speak of taking them in their hand and laying them on their own shoulders in order to carry them.[1] Does this, then, correspond to their *statutes*, which even Bengel would understand as meant here? No, in *their* self-chosen works, ver. 5 (now first comes the transition to these!), they indeed go zealously before the people. We should in that case have to understand Christ as going on to say in ver. 5: "I have said to you that they *do not;* verily, they do indeed outwardly, on account of the people, but that is not the right doing." But this sense, however true as respects the Divine law, yet has respect to this law only as requiring a spiritual obedience; and not to those statutes which actually require only an outward observance, and for the overscrupulous doing of which, not proceeding from the heart, ver. 4 would be a very unsuitable expression. The true explanation of the whole is found afterwards in ver. 23, where the real βαρύτερα τοῦ νόμου certainly correspond to the φορτία βαρέα here; in like manner, Rom. ii. 21–23, rightly understood, Thou stealest, committest adultery, and robbest God in heart, although not in act before the people. In their own hearts the commandment of God is to them an intolerable yoke; not merely in the deep sense of the truth which an honestly striving Paul finds (Acts xv. 10), but with a contemptuous putting aside of the commandment, so that they do not even lay a finger upon it in order to the true keeping of it before God: still they find their pleasure in the δεσμεύειν and ἐπιτιθέναι on account of the office. Of an actual *adding* of their own commandments Christ does not yet speak *here;* else He would certainly have expressed Himself more distinctly upon this important principal point, so as to distinguish between ver. 3 and 4. This, however, is already at all events implied in the idea; viz., that the Pharisees, with self-seeking pleasure, make the commandment of Moses a matter of conscience as *their* commandment; that in *their* binding and imposing, they already *make*

[1] "In what an entirely different light does the Saviour appear, who Himself sought to bear the heaviest burdens, and by His love to make everything easy for His people."—Stein on St Luke.

Hosted by Google

something else out of it; instead of being a call to repentance in order to the knowledge of sin, they rather make it a laying on of all sorts of burdens. In *this* way they indeed *falsify* the law; and they bind its commandments thickly together without *mercy*, ver. 23, so as to be an intolerable burden as coming from their hands. (Chap. xii. 7.) Here the Jurist Grotius is for once a better interpreter than most theologians; he refers to the *benignior interpretatio*, everywhere conceded by Moses, but neglected by his interpreters,[1] who on the contrary only "omnem operam impendebant ritibus *urgendis* et *ampliandis*." Now, in so far as this *ampliare* had more or less a real foundation, at least in the Mosaic *letter*, Jesus will not all at once do away with it before the time, God having permitted the letter to become thus sharp and unbending in the hand of His stewards. With an admirably wise moderation, He *finds fault* with the rigour of the interpreters, yet He stirs up no one of the people to offer resistance to the received interpretation. According to Luke xi. 45, 46, Christ said the same thing expressly to the νομικοῖς, who, as a distinct class (it is there expressly attested), applied themselves to the written law in preference to tradition. Compare, finally, Jer. viii. 8, in the original text, in order to understand the entire relation of the סוֹפְרִים to the תּוֹרַת יְהוָה, as our Lord here views it.

Vers. 5–7. Of the inward *doing* before God, such as the law requires even as declared by them, they will know nothing at all; but what they do as *their* works, *i.e.*, *now* reaching further, what they do according to God's command *and* their own invention, they do only for display before the people. We have here a direct resumption of the Sermon on the Mount, chap. vi. 1 (πρὸς τὸ θεαθῆναι literally as there); and it is to us a confirmation of the reading δικαιοσύνη in that place. *Look at them*, and you will at once see this; for they make it grossly palpable to all! Most appropriately and with no slight scorn, resting upon pure truth, Christ mentions first of all the most outward and trifling observances, because it was precisely these that they made a dis-

[1] For example, in regard to the tithes, it was not agreeable to the intention of the law to extend them to the smallest herb; because these would hardly yield an emolument to the Levites, while they entailed the most grievous vexation on the tithe-payers.

Hosted by Google

play of; only read and observe the description and delineation of Pharisaism as a whole in its pomp and parade, to be found in Buxtorf, Lightfoot, Schöttgen, Lundius. St Mark and St Luke mention only the *περιπατεῖν ἐν στολαῖς*, which is wanting here, and is to be understood chiefly of the wide טַלִּית reaching even to the soles of the feet. The *φυλακτήρια*, or תְּפִלִּין, still in use, were bits of parchment upon which passages from Moses were written, Deut. vi. 4–9 (and therefore that spiritual fundamental commandment held before them by Christ!), xi. 13–21, Ex. xiii. 2–10, 11–16, not however to remind them of these, but for mere outward show. They were inclosed in two cases, bound round the forehead and the arm; and originated in a literal interpretation of Ex. xiii. 9.[1] They are called in Greek *φυλακτήρια not* because they were preservatives or amulets, as, according to ordinary Greek usage, it might be taken. Justin, for example, so misunderstanding it, found fault with these phylacteries on this ground, and indeed such a superstition may at that time have connected itself with them; but, originally, they were only means of *remembrance* or memorandum-papers. Schöttgen, therefore, is more correct than Wahl: quia observatoria quædam erant et hodieque esse debent, ut legis divinæ memores sint. The *κράσπεδα* are the צִיצִית or tassels, which were spoken of before in chap. xxii. 40. There could be no more striking example, and at the same time symbol, of the triflingly *outward* manner in which they handled the Divine commandment than the fancied fulfilment of the earnest admonition of Moses, by the wearing of memorandum-papers and all such frippery. That they make these *broad* and *large* is also symbolical of all their life and action: in the one (which was actually literally enjoined), at least broader and larger than Moses meant, only for show before others, instead of to remind themselves; the other, moreover, was only an exaggerated interpretation of the proverbial saying, Ex. xiii. 9; Deut. vi. 8, 9, comp. Prov. iii. 3; vi. 21; vii. 3.[2] The two together delineate completely their relation to the

[1] The Jews give it a more sacred observance than it receives on the plate worn by the high priest on his forehead; for, the name יְהוָה is there only once, but here it stands 23 times!

[2] Hence the טוֹטָפוֹת in the Sept. are not yet called *φυλακτήρια*; but in the Targum on Deut. they are already called תְּפִלִּין.

Hosted by Google

Torah. See the capouches, tonsures, cowls, rosaries, crucifixes in monkery, with all that is similar to these in heathen Bonzes and Brahmins; ever the same folly of the human heart, betraying itself in these things, such as Christ must needs ridicule and rebuke in these Pharisees in Israel! Decorating the body with all sorts of ornamental appendages is the symbolically significant expression of the Pharisaism of the human heart in its lowest stage, often practised childishly by the heathen; and thus now do even the priests and masters in Israel act in their own fashion! In like manner there is everywhere the same petty desire of honour and place, to which the chief *seats*, with *names* and *titles*, are all-important. It was necessary even to rebuke the *immoderate* ambition which led them to seek and hold fast the chief seat in the synagogue, although that was assigned according to office and right; but the same ambition betrayed itself doubly in this, that they transferred the place in the synagogue also into common life, and even at entertainments contended with each other for the uppermost seats, as in Luke xiv. 7. And now comes the pitiful desire for those titles which have existed from the earliest times, and exist to this day, in the world and the worldly church, with their Excellencies and Eminences, but which the servants of God and interpreters of His word should leave to the world; or, if such titles must exist, should at least not *love them*, but should know better what a mere *being called of men* signifies! Our Lord only begins here to delineate this with the first and most general title *Rabbi* (the repetition of which was especially formal, as is to be seen from Mark xiv. 45), in order to carry it out further in the prohibitory warning addressed to His disciples.

Vers. 8–10. That our Lord does not forbid the outward use of the words and names, but only the disposition expressed in the φιλεῖν τοὺς ἀσπασμοὺς τούτους, and all that is further connected therewith, is so evident that only a Quakerism, which is itself Pharisaic, could misunderstand it. Will Christ, then, forbid children to call their fathers by the name of Father, as would be the case were we to understand the words literally? Even the spiritual children He will not forbid to call their spiritual fathers by the name which properly expresses this relationship (see 1 Cor. iv. 15). He must, in that case, have forbidden many more

Hosted by Google

names, such as Lord and King, and whatever, "*upon earth*" among men, is merely a reflection of Divine honour and dignity. The words are spoken in the first place of the office of teacher; and as surely as Christ afterwards appointed manifold offices in His Church, must these offices also bear their corresponding names. (Acts xiii. 1; 1 Cor. xii. 28; Eph. iv. 11.) This, therefore, He does not forbid, but He says: Ye are *not even* to let yourselves be named Rabbi in *such* a manner, with such *fondness for* and *pretension to* personal authority, as the Pharisees.[1] Between the twice-occurring μὴ κληθῆτε, He puts the equally valid μὴ καλέσητε; therefore that they are not to acknowledge and yield to the like assumption in others.[2] The three titles are a graduated exemplification of what was then in use: *Father* (a natural expression of reverence for superiors occurring from the earliest times, both among Jews and Gentiles) was then in particular a higher title given to the heads of sects; and καθηγητής denotes (although, perhaps, the then existing practice did not exactly correspond to it) a *leader*, to whom others are to be unconditionally subject in matters of knowledge and religion (see Rom. ii. 19, ὁδηγὸς τυφλῶν). There lies, however, in the *threefold* title, and what is connected with it, something more for the disciples of Christ: in the first clause, διδάσκαλος (as the invariable rendering of Rabbi) is certainly the true reading, and ὁ Χριστός to be cancelled, for Christ cannot have needlessly repeated Himself. One is your *Teacher*, because ye shall all be inwardly taught of God (John vi. 45, xiv. 26); that is therefore the *Holy Ghost* in the heart (comp. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34, with Ez. xxxvi. 26, 27). Therefore there follows then the *Father* in heaven, and *Christ*, the one Leader or Forerunner; hence, as Richter perfectly well observes, "a hint at the threefold *I* in God, before which every proud I must disappear."[3] It is, however, not

[1] "Only this is His righteous will, that we desire not the higher place on its own account, and the names Teacher and Father merely on account of these names." Rud. Matthaei.

[2] Lange finds in this change of the expression actually the fore-knowledge, on the part of Christ, that not many would *claim* the name "Father," but that many might wish in a wrong way to ascribe it to others.

[3] When Lange (iii. 210) refers the title "Father" to the *administration*, that of "Leader" to the *Reformation* of the Church, he certainly puts his own idea into the words!

Hosted by Google

enough that only One, as the Triune, is to us the true Teacher, Father, and Leader; Christ adds directly, as the inference from this and as the test of it, But ye are all *brethren!* The great and little, the high and low in place, the masters and beginners are, in respect of their call and immediate relation to God, placed upon a level; therefore, "teachers and learners have the same holy inward Teacher,"[1] all being as yet only learners, children of the one Father, followers of the one Leader. The spirit of this commandment of Christ for His people is not merely that it does away with all those barriers that fence round schools and learned castes in His Church,—which stands not in such things, whose servants and members are to derive their authority and dignity, which the gift of God alone imparts, as little from any faculty whatsoever, as at that time from the Synagogue, —but, moreover, all *respect for men* which, with assumed authority, would force itself between God and us, is done away with. And this is in reality the main thing:—Whoever *assumes* this to himself sins, and even so whoever concedes it to others. "No one is at liberty to take the place of Christ in the Church, and to let himself be called so and so in this sense. The Spirit Himself whom He hath given to the Church must take it of His own, and show it to us. We know of no teacher in the Church besides and beyond Him, and no philosopher in the school to whom we could entrust ourselves."[2] Observe now again how our Lord, abolishing all Old Testament tutorage, brings in a new state of things in the true liberty and equality which is founded on humility before God, now fully revealed and accessible to all; and how He Himself thus exaltedly makes Himself equal with the Father in heaven. What becomes, then, of the primacy of Peter, what of the most Holy Father in Rome, what of the father confessors and generals of the orders, who give themselves out for guides of souls with the demand for unconditional obedience? Every dominion in one's own name falls before Christ; every misuse of the name of God and Christ in order to one's own dominion cometh of evil, proceeds from the same evil heart, as all Pharisaism did once, even though it should again creep in as plausibly as, for example, Zinzendorf's title

[1] Olshausen, Christus der einzige Meister, Konigsberg 1826, p. 14.
[2] Gräber, in the Sermon before the Rhine Provincial Synod, 1838.

Hosted by Google

"Papa" in the Moravian fraternity. Christ will have in the New Testament[1] a directly free and near relation of all to Himself, without human interposition and tutorship. "All, even the weakest, are to be directed to this one true Master, who casts out no one. The point of view from which the teacher is to be regarded must ever be that according to which his hearers shall learn to say, with the inhabitants of Sychar: We believe now, not on account of thy saying; we have ourselves heard and known that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world."[2]

Vers. 11, 12. This one Master, however, has often and long since told you what alone avails in His kingdom, and says it to you once more as the true Forerunner. See chap. xx. 26–28, xviii. 4.; Luke xiv. 11, xviii. 14. This is not accomplished by the *title* servus servorum; rather is this holy fundamental commandment of Christ thereby quite as shamefully and foolishly perverted as at that time the *Hear O Israel* was by the phylacteries. No saying stands in these and other words so often in the Old and New Testament as that concerning humbling and exalting; in this place the first clause has a special significance for those who were arrogantly sitting on Moses' seat, and predicts for them the being cast down, and the coming of others into their place, just as Ez. xxi. 26, 27 already testified. Christ goes before as Leader in humbling Himself so as to be exalted;—*Satan* was the first who exalted himself so as to be humbled.

Vers. 13, 14. They come not into the kingdom of heaven, or rather of their own will *do not enter into it*:—this stands before, and is itself the first *Woe* (as antithetical to the first *Blessed*, chap. v. 3); the immediately following fulfilment of what had just been said, viz., that whosoever will not humble himself in spiritual poverty can also not be exalted. But, in the case of these occupiers of Moses' seat, it is immediately added to this, that they prevent others from entering; nay, the aggravated hypocrisy, consisting in the false pretence of promising help to the people

[1] As already in the Old Testament God the Lord promises to His Israel that He alone should be their Father, and not even Father Abraham or Israel was to be accounted of before Him, Is. lxiii. 16.

[2] Olshausen, at the place cited above, p. 10.

Hosted by Google

into a kingdom of heaven, in order to plunder them of their earthly goods, brings with it forthwith a περισσότερον κρίμα as a second Woe. Observe here, again, the true order of these two verses; as well as the proof that the Οὐαί are not phrases and interjections of passion, but the deliberate announcement of the *condemnation* (ver. 33) upon those who will not go into the kingdom of heaven.—How they shut the kingdom of heaven against men had already been remotely indicated in chap. v. 19; then, in chap. xi. 12, the further development of the enmity against Jesus. In Luke xi. 52, Christ had thus expressed it: Ye have arrogantly appropriated to yourselves the key of knowledge, and taken it away from others (ἤρατε); *i.e.*, not a special key in order to γνῶσις, but rather the key of the *kingdom of heaven*, as the following words show. The *knowledge* is precisely this key; and while the Scribes had usurped to themselves a monopoly of knowledge, they misused it for shutting instead of for opening. In general, the true interpretation and application of the law, that is, consequently, the knowledge of the true way of salvation by repentance and faith (Luke i. 77), is the open door into the kingdom of heaven; and they had stolen and falsified both of these before Christ came. With obstinate consistency they completed this robbery in the days of John and of the Son of Man; had snatched away from the poor people by their authority the acknowledgment of the Messiah; and said to those who wished to believe on Him, and who rarely defended themselves with such bold independence as that blind man, *We know* that this man is a sinner, that must be enough for thee! John ix. 24. They shut the door ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων, they do not let in the already quite near εἰσερχομένους (Present: who are actually on the point of willingly entering);—as they afterwards continued even till the judgment to hinder the preaching of the Gospel for the salvation of the heathen (1 Thess. ii. 16). That they should *say*, We have the key of the kingdom of heaven! and yet prevent others from entering, inasmuch as and because they *will* not enter in themselves—such conduct, on the part of the false teachers and guides, deserves the Woe, deserves the true *title* of *hypocrites*, *blind guides*, *fools*, and *blind*, which now come instead of those before mentioned.—And withal they are the holy ones with their many and *long* prayers; which

Hosted by Google

cost them so much time that it is but reasonable to give them entertainments and gifts in return, all the more because they, as "devout intercessors," wish to let others have the benefit of their sanctity! We must thus understand something of intercession in these prayers, in order that the ἐν προφάσει, or εἰς πρόφασιν, may correspond to what goes before. Christ has in His mind perhaps such prophetic rebukes as Hosea iv. 8; Ez. xxii. 25; more particularly Is. x. 1, 2; Micah ii. 9. They hypocritically cozen poor credulous women so as to get their property and goods (somewhat in the same way as, Luke viii. 3, love to the Lord Jesus led the women to do; or even worse): the wide maw of their avarice swallows whole *houses*, *i.e.*, all the property and possessions of the widows thus defrauded, whom they ought to have protected! Is it not as if Christ had intended to prophesy, at the same time, of the gifts to the clergy in the middle ages, of the profitable traffic in masses for souls (also for the dead husbands of widows) even at this day? But those who thus gather treasures have thereby heaped up for themselves another treasure, the condemnation meted out to them all, the more fully because of the shameful *pretence!*

Ver. 15. As if these persons who are thus accumulating judgment were themselves altogether perfect patterns of holiness; nay more, as if they who thus robbed the people instead of leading them into the kingdom of heaven had already fulfilled their pastoral office in Israel, and had nothing more to do at home, they compass land and sea (a proverbial expression) to make proselytes! Again, an opus supererogationis proceeding from bare hypocrisy, as if an ardent zeal impelled them thus to draw people into the kingdom of heaven. "The Jews, before Christ, were not permitted to act as missionaries; their desire to make proselytes was contrary to the will of God; even Jonah durst not preach Mosaism, the Jewish religion of shadows, to the Ninevites, but only the wrath of God, in order to repentance." (Richter.) The σεβόμενοι or φοβούμενοι τὸν θεὸν, יִרְאֵי יְהוָה, who, actuated by an inward impulse of truth, joined themselves to the Jews, and who, in the New Testament and in other history, are represented as a most praiseworthy class of men, through whom the transition of the Gospel to the heathen was

Hosted by Google

instrumentally effected, but who were hardly acknowledged by the Pharisees, regarded by them only with envy and contempt—these were not the complete "proselytes of righteousness" *made* by the Pharisees, whom Christ here means. These latter were rare, because a heathen would hardly be induced to take upon him the entire yoke of the Jewish law. Therefore: "If ye have made one such proselyte, ye think ye have made a conquest of which ye may ever after be proud; therefore all your concern has been just to effect this, ye give yourselves no further trouble. And when (as in a rare case) ye have succeeded in your object, when one has entirely surrendered himself to you as his patterns, what do ye *make* further of this proselyte whom you have gained? *Twofold* more a son of hell, *i.e.*, one deserving of, and doomed to condemnation, than ye yourselves are!" A sharp word, but, startling as it may sound, nothing but the truth, as confirmed again by history in all times. Let it not be objected that surely the seduced were less guilty than the seducers, that it is at least enough if both fall together into the same pit; what Christ here means reaches farther, and justly so. He who could yield himself up to such Pharisees from heathenism, must have done so from the first with an evil conscience; and if he remained in the school what must become of him! The Pharisees for their own knowledge and conscience had the true word of God still near to them; but the Judaism planted by them *at second hand* had of course no longer anything of the true kernel, but, on the contrary, only the assumed mask, so that the poor heathen was better before as a simple heathen. They taught him systematically to act the hypocrite; therefore was he, "by being indoctrinated into hypocrisy," twofold a child of hell. Here also our Lord condemns, by anticipation, all that false proselyte-making of the pseudo-church which strives only after the outward increase of its body; all appliance of power without persuasion (instead of the apostolic πείθειν, 2 Cor. v. 11); and all perplexing of the conscience, so as to catch people without being able or willing to convert them.[1] For, every change of religion, without a felt necessity and conviction of the heart, is only a hurt and a loss;

[1] Comp. Nitzsch prakt. Theologie i. 288.

Hosted by Google

as may be seen, not alone in the Christians made by the missions of the Jesuits, or even in renegades. Thus does moral corruption, false doctrine, and corrupt practice, become worse and worse when it is delivered from hand to hand, and everywhere we find the disciples and adherents worse than their masters!

Vers. 16–22. Now comes in the true order the *false doctrine*, which these blind guides implant in the people at home, and in the proselytes over land and sea; so that they come not into the kingdom of heaven but into hell. If, on the one hand, the Pharisees are severe in binding and imposing the law, they know, on the other hand, when to loose and to *dispense* with it; this, however, results in a still worse caprice. Christ, as we know, prefers to speak, not in abstract generalities, but in concrete examples; therefore He gives here, first of all, two designative examples with their refutation (vers. 16, 17, and 18, 19), then a further refuting counter-affirmation with reference to the same two examples (vers. 20, 21)—wherewith, finally, in connection with the last instance of their *outward* manner of dealing with the law, viz., "Whoso sweareth by *heaven*," He points to Him with whom alone we have to do in everything, the living *God*, to whom the Pharisees do not give what is due (vers. 21, 22). The Lord purposely selects examples such as those of which He had already spoken in the Sermon on the Mount, Matt. v. 34, and again afterwards, chap. xv. 5; for He will here, chiefly pointing backwards, draw the final inference and pronounce the decisive sentence. He selects them, also, as affording a striking specimen of the way in which the holy name of God is hid beneath formulas and webs of lies, and as a most suitable preparation for the conclusion of the entire discourse. These guides in Israel are, alas! *mere* servants of the *Temple* and *altar*, not of *God*, whom they forget in their regard for these; therefore that which alone they wanted to have is at last, after much long-suffering, *left* to them, viz., the Temple—but as *their* house, without the indwelling of God, consequently desolate! (ver. 38). And what now is this their house? Nothing else than what they have made of it, an abode of murderers, which must fall to pieces upon their blood-guilty heads! *Ye blind guides!* This, too, had already been said before, chap. xv. 14, and Luke vi. 39;

Hosted by Google

here it is further intensified into *fools* and blind, *i.e.*, wilfully not seeing. Everywhere does Pharisaism and Jesuitism express itself especially in the wresting and misconstruing of the oath; and even now it is difficult to obtain from the Jews a binding oath, they have always in store many an οὐδέν ἐστιν.[1] The gold of the Temple is not the gold which adorned its walls, but the rich Temple-treasure, which yet, according to their principle, must "ever be accounted poor," so that never enough could be made over to it—the Corban set apart for sacred uses; for, from motives of self-interest, these knaves gave the preference to the gold and the altar-gifts even in oaths. And how perverse! Is it not through the Temple that the gold becomes the gold of *the Temple;* is it not through the altar that the gift becomes an *offering?* The altar is most holy, Ex. xxix. 37.[2] Whosoever, therefore, swears by the *altar*, includes, of course, all that belongs to the destination of the altar, all that is upon it or that belongs to it; the altar is the *greater* in which the less is comprehended. And now ver. 21 is not merely parallel with the preceding, in which case Christ would have said "by the Temple and—the gold that is in it and on it"—but He here advances further, and suddenly rises higher, disclosing the ground of the whole in the words, "And by *Him that dwelleth therein!*" This leads further still: the Temple, which is itself sacred only through *God's* presence in it, is the dwelling place of this God only as a figure of the heaven (1 Kings viii. 27, 30). Therefore here also, as in the Sermon on the Mount, oaths by heaven are the same as by the *throne of God.* Finally, for these fools and blind it must even yet be added, "And by Him who sitteth on the throne;" otherwise, as in Moses' seat they forgot Moses himself, so in the end would they forget in the seat of God the living God Himself, and make empty oaths by the mere "*seat* of God." He who sits there will certainly one day thrust down those who sit on *their* seat; and He who sits above at His right hand, will

[1] As at that time even in Rome the Jewish casuistry was well-known and notorious; *hence* in Martial (xi. 94): Ecce negas, jurasque mihi *per templa* Tonantis; non credo: jura, verpe, per Anchialum.

[2] Yet we are not *there* to understand with many against the LXX.: *All* that touches the altar is thereby *sanctified.* This would correspond here indeed to the discourse of Christ, but compare Lev. ii. 3.

Hosted by Google

one day make His enemies His footstool. By this simple word, "*He that sitteth thereon*," everything has been said to them. For the rest, we already know that Christ does not approve of oaths by the altar, Temple, or heaven; He only brings them forward because they are in use, and, tracing them back, shows that they are all in reality oaths by God. Whoso *swears* by the Temple means the Temple as rendered sacred by God; swears, therefore, as by the Temple, so in that very oath by Him who dwells therein. So also by the *heaven*—for all oaths by created things are otherwise contradiction and unreason—he can mean only the heaven where God is; therefore, in reality, only the living God who hears his vain oath. What patience on the part of Christ, thus again in *this* discourse, to enter so fully into the refutation of their folly! He thus condescends in order to say and show before all the people, by the one differently applied example: *This* and *such like* are your ordinances, which cannot bear the test of reason, and which have already been sufficiently refuted by Me! How great and how bad must have been the wilful neglect of what is of main importance in those miserably trifling pickings and choosings; the forgetting of God in the Temple and the heaven; consequently, the transgressing of His commandment which requires the heart, in people who believe such doctrine![1]

Vers. 23, 24. The first four woes are past; the three others follow in rapid succession, ever heavier on the head, ever deeper into the heart. Now comes first, properly speaking, the *personal* conduct of these blind guides, *their own* inward character and true state before God, when the bottom of their heart is disclosed to them. It was (Lev. xxvii. 30) doubtful as to the interpretation, and as to practice disputable, whether tithe was to be paid of all garden-herbs, even the least. The Pharisees, in such things, did rather too much than too little; but the *weightier* part of the law,—more difficult, indeed, even to touch than all outward obligation was to bear,—they had consciously long since entirely given up or left behind! Thus the

[1] Zeller (Beugg. Monatsbl. 1843, 5) finds in the hypocritical casuistry of these lax directors of conscience a *fourfold hypocrisy;* approving of unspiritual abuses—releasing from obligations—inverting religious ideas and Divine ordinances—making self-interest a rule of conduct.

Hosted by Google

βαρύτερα does not certainly all at once mean only "what is more important, the main thing," but refers back to ver. 4; still, the expression of course passes over to this signification, for what is weighty and difficult is certainly what is important, and essential above other things. The form ἀφήκατε contrasts quite correctly with ἀποδεκατοῦτε; the one ye do ever diligently, the other ye have already let slip, put aside; as in many things ye have put aside the commandment of God, for the sake of your statutes (chap. xv.), so in those others, in which ye appear before the people as the scrupulous fulfillers of the Mosaic commandments, ye have neglected the inward, the *essential* part of the law properly so called. Whosoever has put this away from him, actually retains only time and inclination for zeal in tithes of cummin. The καί that follows, *explains* their wonderfully faithful conscientiousness, and discloses the evil ground of it. Again, with unconscious irony, speaking to them as it were in their own language, Christ sets in opposition to the threefold tithes *three* things to be given to God; as, but for this antithesis, He would, according to chap. xxii. 40, have specified only the love of God and our neighbour. In Luke chap. xi. 40, the saying *followed* that about cleansing the outside of the vessels which it here precedes; the connection, however, is in both places the same, for our Lord mentions here that to which these Pharisees attached greater importance than to inward cleansing before God. There *two* kinds of herbs were specially named (and then in addition πᾶν λάχανον); therefore also, in opposition to these, only a twofold inward character (and conduct proceeding from such character): judgment and the love of God; *i.e.*, in addition to the *righteousness* that judges true judgment (which always remains the first and foremost thing in the *law*), the love that *proceeds from God and is well-pleasing to God*, exactly in the sense of Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7. Here, connecting still more closely with that word, the idea in its trichotomy takes a different turn. It is *not*, however, judgment upon yourselves, mercy towards others, faith in God; for in this sense πίστις is no βαρύτερον τοῦ νόμου; if this third is understood of the "disposition of mind from which both proceed," then is the order of the antithesis broken. We apprehend the meaning of the words rather as follows. *First of all*, the κρίσις as that which at all events goes before, עֲשׂוֹת

Hosted by Google

מִשְׁפָּט וּצְדָקָה (since Gen. xviii. 19, occurring so often in the law and prophets), viz., the *righteousness* that discharges all the debt of the law; but in so far as it rests on a true judgment which is just, and that again upon a thorough self-judgment applied first of all within, Luke xii. 57.[1] *Then*, further, the mercy or love which God teaches, requires, and gives as the spirit of the law rather than strict justice. Finally, with these there is joined a third and perfect thing, the *πίστις* as אֱמוּנָה; the reality and perfection of justice as of love, the *sincerity and truth* which stands opposed to the seeming faithfulness in trifling observances. (Bengel: sinceritas, quae opponitur hypocrisi, nam qui, c. xxiv. 51, dicuntur hypocritae, Luke xii. 46, dicuntur *ἄπιστοι*:—we compare in addition to this, *πιστός*, Matt. xxiv. 45.) Thus the whole becomes parallel at the same time to that prophetical word, Micah vi. 8;—the third not excepted in respect of its inner sense; for he who walks humbly before God is sincere and entire. The same contrast of outward trifles with what is truly essential is again presented by Christ in connection with another of the minutiæ to which the Pharisees attached so much importance. It was the custom to strain wine, vinegar, and all sorts of drink, carefully through linen cloth; so that not the smallest unclean animalcule, not even a יַבְחוּשׁ—(which, in the writings of the Rabbins, is the special name for a sort of insect in wine), might be drunk with it, and thus Lev. xi. 20, 23, 41, 42, be transgressed; as the Buddists in Ceylon and Hindostan do with drinking-water at this day. Now Christ Himself for once makes a proverb out of this: "Who strain out the gnats, even the smallest single gnat, and yet, without seeing it, drink down, swallow *the camel!*" He puts in opposition another *unclean* animal, and that an enormous one (chap. xix. 24); so as, at the same time, to denote the monstrousness of their hypocrisy which tolerated this, as before their greedy avarice was denoted by the devouring of houses. The sense of the passage in itself, after the foregoing verse, needs no explanation; but that there might be no misunderstanding, as if He meant to say that faithfulness in *little things* is not necessary, our Lord put between these sayings

[1] He who judges himself in his own conscience, and he alone, exercises justice and righteousness towards others. V. Meyer, Blätter fur höhere Wahrh. vi. 145.

Hosted by Google

the words, *These ought ye to have done and not to leave the other undone* (ἀφιέναι as ἀφῆκατε). Justice, love, and faithfulness—these are the principal things to be *done*; while the outward trifling observances are, just on account of the *faithfulness* which certainly imparts value to them, the things *not to be omitted*.[1] When the philologist begins with trifling minutiæ, and does not go beyond these, the reason certainly is that he has no sense for the spirit and meaning of the writer; this latter, however, being presupposed, he should then not neglect even a single iota. Thus Christ here means that the tithe of mint, anise, and cummin is also to be paid, *if* the conscience finds these in the letter and sense of the law:—I am in that case not even to swallow the *gnats*, and think the trifle may thus be disposed of. But He will have conscientiousness in what is least, only to proceed from inward faithfulness upon the whole.

Vers. 25–28. The Pharisees had already heard of the washing of vessels (Mark vii. 4); here it forms the transition from such things as still rest on the Mosaic commandments when pressed in the letter, to such as were self-chosen. Speaking generally, the advance which our Lord here makes from what goes before is manifold: while, by a slight connection, He passes from the strained drink to the drinking and eating vessels, He now makes use of this figure only more exactly to denote what is *outward*, and what *inward* (according to Mark vii. 15, 18–23); He then proceeds to apply the figure of the vessels to represent the men themselves, points them to their *own consciousness* of inward uncleanness in their hypocrisy. "Ye knaves know well what is in your so cleanly-washed cups and platters, how you have gotten it, and how used it; for both these, the sinful *getting* and sinful *enjoyment*,[2] are plainly meant by the ἁρπαγῆς καὶ ἀκρασίας (*this* and not ἀδικίας is the true reading).[3] If now, first of all, the *inside* of the cups and platters is to be cleansed (and that not hastily by giving a few alms therefrom,

[1] Such things must also be done on account of the commandment—says Sirach, chap. xxxv. 7. (In Meyer ver. 4, comp. the original text.)

[2] Which twofold idea Lange even finds to be indicated in the *cups* and *platters*.

[3] Not however with Grotius πάσης ἀκαθαρσίας, which follows at the end, ver. 27.

Hosted by Google

as is said mockingly, Luke xi. 41; but as it follows there in ver. 42), it thus appears that the inner side and contents of the vessel also belong to the outside as regards the man himself and his heart; therefore quite naturally the vessel becomes a figure of the Pharisee, as was plainly said in Luke xi. 39 by τὸ ἔσωθεν ὑμῶν, and is indicated here also in ver. 26. In every sense—even in the outward vessel, how much more in the doing and inner being of the man—it is true that he alone who has cleansed the inward part, has also made the outward truly and actually *clean;* while he who only cares for the outward, is far from having therefore done all for the inward. Luke xi. 40, Tit. i. 15. Therefore look now at *your* inward part—there is *death!* A new and profoundly terrible figure, derived from the worst form of Levitical uncleanness, now follows, viz.: whitewashed *sepulchres*—which, at the same time, already, as it were, prepares the way for what is further said, ver. 29. A human heart can be a temple of the living God, or a grave;—a heaven, or a hell. The prophet, Ez. xiii. 10, spake of plastering the wall with slacked lime, which in Acts xxiii. 3 appears as a proverb, and Christ has here intensified the expression to the utmost degree; we know of no more horrible, and, at the same time, more appropriate, figure whereby to express the lying contrast between the outside and the inside in those hypocrites; it is also the last woe, the seventh, whereby they are completely portrayed and condemned. The tombs were spread over with lime,[1] less for ornament (although this also comes in at ver. 29) than as a necessary mark of distinction, that *pollution* might be avoided (for the Jews extended to the sepulchre what was true only of the corpse); Christ, therefore, will here say, Whosoever rightly considers and rightly regards your whitewashed sanctity, ought to beware of you, for he that touches you pollutes himself, touches death![2] Your whitewash looks, indeed, quite

[1] A practice which was even repeated yearly on the fifteenth of Adar.

[2] The figure in Luke xi. 44 was *otherwise* applied, although with the same fundamental idea; for the Pharisaic whitewash is indeed not seen by the people to be only the superscription, Here is a sepulchre! Μνημεῖα ἀδηλα—as the Talmud speaks of קֶבֶר הַנִּמְצָא *i.e.*, sepulchres only found out to be such afterwards (Babyl. Sanh. Fol. 47, 2. Hieros. Nedarim 57, 4). A sepulchre marked out with painted bones is called קֶבֶר מְצֻיָּר as distinguished from קֶבֶר יְהוּדִים.

Hosted by Google

seemly, ὡραῖοι, and gives no distinct portraiture of the dead bones within; yet the ὀστέα νεκρά and *all the filth* of corruption are within. *Such are ye*—is again declared with abundant plainness in ver. 28: Your δίκαιοι is nothing else than an ἔξωθεν φαίνειν. "Your religion is the whitewash," exclaims Wurster to the Pietists of the present day. Your morality, virtue, etc., is the whitewash—must we say to the hypocrites of all sorts.

Vers. 29–33. The eighth woe plainly comprises all the seven in the κρίσις τῆς γεέννης, connecting itself with the beginning, ver. 13; and includes the wicked seed with their wicked fathers in one collective sin, guilt, and punishment. *The hypocrites* (this remains their title now for the seventh time) protest, indeed, against this in word and deed; but before God their protestation is held for what it is worth, and is rather turned against them as their own confession. They repaired, adorned, even built anew the sepulchres of the prophets and pious men of old; just like our own time with its rage for monuments and jubilees. When the people are so busily occupied with such work it is an evil sign for the present. Men are fond of praising the dead witnesses for truth, whom, if alive, they would thrust from them; they are glad, so to speak, that they have only to build sepulchres and monuments for them. Thus does Christ view their conduct here, because He sees through the hypocrisy: Ye yourselves, even when ye protest against "your *fathers*," confess against your will that ye are the children of those who murdered the prophets. In Luke xi. 47, 48 the idea comes still more sharply out; not in the form of the protesting word, but of the confessing deed: Yea, the fathers were the murderers of the dead, and ye willingly come after to build the sepulchres of the dead; yet how glad ye are in your hearts that the prophets—the rejected enemies of all hypocrisy and trifling with the law, the messengers of God, witnesses for the truth and preachers of repentance—give you no more trouble! *Sit licet divus, dunmodo non vivus.* Their writings ye read not as they ought to be read; their example you follow not, but set up fine sepulchres for them. *Those* were true men of God against whom our fathers sinned—so you say—but the present are false ones whom we now justly persecute and stone. "Ask in Moses' time, Who

Hosted by Google

are the good people? they will be Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but not Moses—he should be stoned. Ask in Samuel's times, Who are the good people? they will be Moses and Joshua; but not Samuel. Ask in the times of Christ, and they will be all the former prophets with Samuel; but not Christ and His Apostles." (Berlenb. Bibel.) Instead of the penitent confession so frequently put into the mouths of the people by the prophets, We have sinned we and our fathers! the last and worst generation now protests in vain against its fellowship with the guilt of the fathers, which it rather carries out to its worst extreme, completes, and thus *fills up the measure.* (Acts vii. 52.) Be it so, *do this; i.e.*, ye shall do it, through God's permitting long-suffering, which afterwards has an end, and is turned into wrath. Thus does Christ speak to them as to Judas (John xiii. 27). A profound significance for the unity of the entire Scripture and the recorded dealings between God and men lies in this, that Israel's end is here denoted by the same which in the beginning was said of the *Amorites*, who were driven out before them; viz., by the filling up of the measure of their sins, Gen. xv. 16. The mills of the gods grind late, but they grind clean: this the heathen also knew, because history teaches it; so should we also, without false refinement, recognise in God's doings both of these things, the long-suffering which waits, and the wrath which at length breaks out. The Divine principle, according to which generations and nations are included in the reckoning of a collective guilt, and at length the collective punishment is made to fall upon the last, runs through all history; we shall not now deviate too far from the exposition by entering into the depths of this principle. The key lies already in the hypocritical word ver. 30, which becomes true only when inverted, viz.: If they had been in the times of their fathers they would also have shed all that blood. "He whose inward wickedness has risen to a high pitch, is regarded as if he too had done all that others have done from like wickedness." (Roos.) "A murderer comes into fellowship with all murderers, a whoremonger into fellowship with all whoremongers and adulterers. They all stand as branches upon one root, they all work to one end, they all approve of one another's works." (Rieger.) The fellowship of sin and punishment before God's judgment actually extends thus

Hosted by Google

far, even to the descending connection of growing corruption; as is seen in a people when the children, not warned by the guilt of their fathers, continue it and carry it to its consummation. Therefore, afterwards, even all the blood shed *upon the earth* (Luke, since the foundation of the world), from the murder of Abel downwards, is reckoned to the last evil generation of the Jews. Upon this a book might be written: we deem it sufficient now only to point out that Christ thus affirms, in all its severity, this reckoning before God's judgment; but that He yet lays the principal emphasis, in order to conviction, upon the long-suffering which waited patiently and exhausted every call of grace before the filling up of the measure of sin. What He says in ver. 33 is almost word for word the first discourse of the Baptist (chap. iii. 7); for to this it returns, because every intervening call and invitation to repentance for the kingdom of heaven had proved *in vain*. Now, indeed, the πῶς φύγητε (as Alford has well reminded me), instead of the still warning τίς ὑπέδειξεν ὑμῖν, sounds stronger and more decisive. A further confirmation of the as yet more figurative γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν which the Baptist uttered, is here added by Christ in the quite unfigurative ὄφεις; and the whole together means not merely *sinners born of sinners* (with reference to ver. 31), but speaks plainly, in the sense of John viii. 44, of him who at Rev. xii. 9 is called ὁ ὄφις ὁ ἀρχαῖος. Thus does it correspond to the γέεννα, whose κρίσις the περισσότατον in addition to the περισσότερον ver. 14 expresses; and designates as at ver. 15, the ἐκ τοῦ πατρὸς τοῦ διαβόλου ὄντας as complete υἱοὺς γεέννας.

Ver. 34. What is here meant by the διὰ τοῦτο? It is only trifling with the simple word to supply as follows, "in order that if possible ye may yet flee from the damnation of hell!"—for the impossibility of this has just been affirmed in the πῶς φύγητε; the filling up of the measure of sin has just been imputed to them, has been already predicated of them as certain; and the τοῦτο can alone refer to *this* import of the two last propositions. Therefore it must mean, *in order that* ye may kill them, *in order that* thereby all blood may come upon you, *therefore* are they sent. Yet not directly thus; for the decisive ὅπως, ver 35, is rather connected with *their* killing and crucifying, and not precisely with the sending on the part of Christ. The

Hosted by Google

true force of the expression is, that the wisdom and long-suffering of the Lord who foresaw the judgment, *therefore* offers yet an opportunity of contracting the last guilt; in order that, on the one hand, the measure of grace may be filled up even to the last overflow, and, on the other, that, by the actually perpetrated sin, it might indisputably appear to all the world, that the condemned were deserving of their punishment.[1] This again is a principle of His justice belonging to the unsearchable ways of God (Rom. xi. 33); that He who might already judge every one according to all that he had done or would do, yet lets the sin exhaust and complete itself, before the judgment, in actual deeds.—The ἰδού already plainly shows, even before we read the Futures which follow, that it is no longer the former Prophets that are spoken of, but a new sending that is soon to begin. Observe the majestic *I* with which He who is still in humiliation, who is Himself to be first crucified by them, yet looking beyond this, puts Himself in the place of the God who sends the Prophets! (Is. xli. 27.) Here there is seen one of the significant differences between this last discourse and the earlier one (Luke chap. xi.), where Christ as yet veils His *I* under the "wisdom of God." Now, however, He *takes for granted* what the parable of the vineyard had said of the killing of the Son, who, although rejected, is yet exalted to be the corner-stone; what the following parable of the marriage had said of the new sending of Him who is yet to ascend the throne; and what finally chap. xxii. 24 had said of sitting at the right hand of God:—therefore is the crucifying of the Lord Himself entirely passed over, and at once comprehended in the emphatic ἐγὼ ἀποστέλλω.[2] The offence against those who are sent proceeds, first of all, by an anti-climax, from killing (and even) crucifying, to scourging (already signified to the disciples at chap. x. 17),

[1] Roos: "It depended upon a test. Christ had also prophets and wise men and scribes to send out. Now just as they did to these, so also would they have done to all the prophets."

[2] For "that the Saviour here includes Himself in the rank of those sent by God" is impossible, nor does He send Himself; we shall soon understand more particularly why He throws a veil over *His* blood. The fact that messengers of Jesus were *crucified* also before the destruction of Jerusalem, we learn here, as history does not record everything.

Hosted by Google

and thence down to persecuting; in like manner the designation of the persons sent is according to three grades, here more concretely carried out than the *Prophets and Apostles* in Luke. The special apostolic dignity has its significance only for the new Church; yet all who testify of Christ and preach Him are His *messengers*, which could alone be meant also in St Luke.[1] On the other hand, there is here another difference from that earlier discourse in St Luke. The prophetic authority stands first in analogy with those old Prophets; then follow those who are not indeed equipped in the same way, but yet are furnished with a specially convincing *wisdom* of the Spirit; finally, the true "scribes" as opposed to the false ones (chap. xiii. 52), who, condescending more than the others to the manner of men and of the Jews, show to them out of their Scripture that Jesus is the Christ. Stephen was a *wise* man, Apollos a *Scribe*, the Apostles *Prophets;* while St Paul at least was certainly all of them together. The seeming anti-climax is now, however, changed into its opposite, when we understand the matter thus: the *killing* and *crucifying of the Prophets* was as it were a thing to which they were accustomed from of old, was only a continuation of their past doings; but, that *in their synagogues* (mark this particular) they should answer the undeniably God-given wisdom also of the *wise* men with *scourging;* that they should at least persecute from city to city even the *scribes*, in order thoroughly to suppress their quiet testimony,—in this the guilt of their resistance to the truth rises to a higher pitch. They leave unpersecuted not even the least one, who without preaching with prophetical urgency merely dares, by way of testimony, to interpret the Scripture against them.

Vers. 35, 36. Upon *you:* this comprehends, for the first, the wicked guides and heads of the people,—who also in the foregoing verse appeared as the originators of all persecution—with *this* entire *generation*, and that for the past and the future; for it is now said, Zacharias whom *ye* slew! (Comp. 1. Thes. ii. 15.) The expression αἷμα δίκαιον or ἀθῷον (chap. xxvii. 4), is one of very frequent occurrence in the Old Testament, which comes out with increasing strength especially before the Babylonish captivity, in reference to the guilt which drew down that

[1] Quite in the same general usage, which we find also John xiii. 16.

Hosted by Google

judgment; see 2 Kings xxi. 16, xxiv. 4; Jer. xxvi. 15. The principal passage, however, which Christ has probably in His mind, and which the Spirit caused to be written in connection with that first judgment as a typical prophecy of the second, is to be found in Lam. iv. 12, 13. *Three times* in the one verse does the Lord mention *blood;* and now, from that point of view in which God regards the whole human race, lays to the account of this Jerusalem and Israel all the righteous blood shed *upon the earth*, just as His Spirit again does to the future Babylon, Rev. xviii. 24. The first righteous person[1] upon earth murdered through hatred of God and fraternal hatred was *Abel;* of his murder also is Israel guilty, for they have done worse to Christ than Cain did to his brother. *Zacharias*, however, is *certainly not* that righteous Zacharias, the son of Baruch, of whose murder in the temple shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem Josephus gives an account, Arch. iv. 19—as, for example, Hug formerly maintained, while even Richter still admits "a concealed prophecy" pointing to him—but probably that Zacharias of whom we read in 2 Chron. xxiv. 20–22. The distinct expression ἐφονεύσατε cannot be an anticipating prophecy; for, Christ now uses, in opposition to the expressly marked *future* in ver. 34, quite as expressly the *past* in ver. 35, in order then at ver. 36 to comprise both in the ταῦτα πάντα. A prophecy pointing to an individual by name (not to say that Baruch is not Barachias) seems forced, and highly unsuitable to Christ's present frame of mind; one can see no satisfactory ground for it at all. True, indeed, it cannot be objected to that opinion, that the Zacharias mentioned by Josephus was no messenger of Christ, for only *righteous* persons are spoken of by St Matthew; —still, in St Luke, it is certainly the blood of all the prophets. Finally, it is quite decisive to observe that Christ here, according to the *Scripture* (to which He makes such manifold allusions throughout the discourse), intended to bring together the *first* and *last* example which the Scripture records. It is useless to ask whether the Jews did not shed righteous blood, or the blood of prophets, afterwards; the circle of canonical history comprehends typically all that was done in Israel and upon the earth.

[1] See the interpretation of Heb. xii. 24, in my Brief an die Hebraer.

Hosted by Google

It is worthy of remark that the designation *between the temple and the altar of burnt-offering* (not without reference to vers. 17–19 before[1]) agrees with the express words of 2 Chron. xxiv. 21; and it is further significant that precisely this Zacharias said when dying, The Lord will see it and *seek* it! (comp. in Luke ἵνα ἐκζητηθῇ.) There is even a Jewish legend which says that his blood bubbled up and flowed, and would not be stayed for 252 years, even till the burning of the temple in the city of the murder, until Nebusaradan had slaughtered there 940,000 priests, prophets, and chiefs of the people with their children: from which we may infer that this deed of murder in the holy city was regarded by the Jews themselves from ancient times as a proverbially fearful example. Such connection of a name well-known to the Pharisees and Scribes with the universally known name of Abel, is certainly much more natural than any special prophecy.[2] So much remains certain, that our Lord will here say what He at last seals with Amen: The great collective guilt of all the blood shed on the earth, as it is represented and shadowed forth in the history of the Holy Scripture from Abel to Zacharias, will break forth in vengeance *upon this generation* in a collective punishment, as well typical as real—this evil and adulterous generation which speaks as in ver. 30, and acts as in ver. 34! which thus fills to overflowing the measure of sin against the long-suffering of God! That is, indeed, first of all the *last generation* of this people, the wicked and adulterous generation possessed by the return of seven worse devils along with the first, which, in its sins, repeats and sums up all that went before; yet, in so far as the fathers are repre-

[1] In the most holy place of the fore-court, which also Josephus denotes: μέχρι τοῦ βωμοῦ καὶ τοῦ νεῶ.

[2] With regard, finally, to the entirely subordinate point respecting the name Barachias instead of Jehoiada (for the apocryphal gospel of the Nazarenes with its Jehoiada is of as little value here as the apocryphal fable concerning the father of the Baptist)—it is said that both names have the same meaning, as names are frequently thus varied; or it is found to be a later corruption of the evangelical text (only not on account of Josephus, for then it would be Baruch); or even an original error of memory, confounding this person with Zech. i. 1. To us the word of Christ is too solemn to admit of such disputes. For the rest, Theile's treatise in Winer's Journal, Vol. ii., speaks very fully of the whole matter.

Hosted by Google

sented as only meeting their full punishment in their children, the γενεὰν ταύτην here includes at the same time the entire people, of whom it is said (ver. 35), *Ye* have slain. It is a groundless assertion that γενεά, in the New Testament, can never signify "people;" see in chap. xii. 45 the same connection of this generation with their fathers, and then afterwards the remarkable passage (chap. xxiv. 34), according to our interpretation.

It may be asked, finally, Does not the *blood* also of the crucified Son of God in, and with, all the others, come upon this generation? If this question means, Wherefore does Christ not expressly or chiefly *specify* this here? the first answer is easy; for, even as regards outward propriety, it would be highly unsuitable openly to say such a thing at this farewell. For, this would be more than the word of Zacharias, The Lord will see and seek it! But the reason lies still deeper: partly, in the Saviour's feeling of love and compassion, which makes it impossible for Him to express this threatening of vengeance; partly, in the truth corresponding to this feeling, that in fact the blood of *Christ*, although His crucifiers call it down upon their heads, yet even to the last judgment of the world continues to speak better things than the blood of Abel, viz., grace and not vengeance. So that, in the restored Israel at last, this blood-guiltiness is yet cleansed away (Joel iii. 26); and the vengeance on account of the rejected blood of *reconciliation* extends to quite another sphere, belongs to quite another judgment, than that which is first of all historically represented in Israel.

Ver. 37. Did Christ Himself say, Behold here a greater than Jonas—then may also His interpreter say to the generation of this time, Behold here is something incomparably greater than, and different from, ought that has ever been uttered in accents breaking from the heart, and penetrating to the heart, in all human poems and histories. *Jerusalem! Jerusalem!* Thus cries the Messiah, the God and Lord, and Saviour of Israel in the flesh, who sent all the prophets, who is Himself come, and will again send Apostles, who will soon, by the hands of His enemies, hang upon the cross, by His own and the Father's Divine power will rise from the opened grave, and sit upon the throne of heaven—thus cries Jesus over the sinners who will not

Hosted by Google

have Him and His grace, but cleave to their sin and their judgment. What a *tone* and *sound* for the hearers must this word have had when it came from the mouth of Christ: the already filled up measure of all Divine grace and Saviour-love, in opposition to the measure of sin, now soon to be filled up by the children who, centuries long, had been nourished and brought up in vain—that first call of the Creator, "Adam, where art thou, whither wilt thou?" breaking forth inconceivably intensified from the heart of the Son of Man moved with human passion—the most perfect unity of alluring love and judging wrath in this double lament, *Jerusalem! Jerusalem!* Hear, ye heavens, and give ear, O earth! for—*the Lord speaketh!!* And are we to take away these words from *this* place, in His farewell, which alone is their proper place; are we to believe that the Evangelist has presumed to elaborate and improve the Divine drama? Rather would we believe that Christ had already uttered three times—ten times before (which would not be so wrong) this word which He now utters for the last time with most striking emphasis.[1]

The word as a whole is a prolepsis of the decisive judgment, stretching beyond the preaching of the Apostles, the rejection of which Christ already knew beforehand: the Jerusalem which He means is the entire people, including past times, viewed in its centre. Vers. 34 and 35 are now connected in one, as also already ver. 36; therefore the ἀπεσταλμένοι, as opposed to the former prophets, are the new messengers who should yet invite the guests to the marriage in vain, and the first of whom was at once *stoned* (Acts vii.) as Moses commanded that the *false* prophets should be stoned.[2] Between Prophets and Apostles then comes the exalted *I* of the incarnate Lord, who is, at the same time, *above* Prophets and Apostles; for, this Lord it is who has always sent, and now sends, and who Himself also came and

[1] Dorner says, moreover, correctly: Haec verba a Christo dicta esse non eo loco, quo Lucas vult, sed quo Matthæus, verba ipsa indicant; tunc enim dicta sunt, cum ultima voce Christus discederet e templo numquam eo rediturus.

[2] In the construction πρὸς αὐτήν, which is also according to grammatical usage, there is expressed here, at the same time, a bitterly complaining, unconscious *turning away* of the countenance from the murderess of the prophets; after which it turns to her again

Hosted by Google

called in all His messengers. The *I* of Christ embraces at the same time all the past, even as ver. 34 the future. "He never forgets His part,"—to speak foolishly for the sake of the fools; He can never, at any time, deny who He is, and even when He appears most human, the consciousness of His eternal Divine dignity shines through with all the more immediate reality. *Thy children*—that is, at the same time, all the people of this sacred metropolis scattered in the country or over the earth. It would be a very false narrowing of the discourse as a whole, to explain the words *How often!* of Christ's frequent visits to the metropolis at the festivals; it speaks in a higher and more comprehensive style. *How often!* includes at the same time all the calls of the former Prophets, with all the invitations of those afterwards sent, and known beforehand to be in vain; although it places the calls and invitations of Christ Himself in the centre. Our Lord would ever from time to time have *gathered* them all as His people into His kingdom, to His heart. But not by force; in this way no one is drawn into God's kingdom, to God's heart; even Israel's Messiah is only a Saviour who at last passively offers Himself, who must leave it to the will of men to come or not, and must go away when they will not and do not come. As an *eagle* stirreth up her nest,[1] fluttereth over her young, and then beareth them herself on her wings—so did Jehovah at first, Deut. xxxii. 11, and afterwards ever more kindly and lovingly offer His sheltering wing to His people, in the word of the prophets (Ps. xvii. 8, xxxvi. 8, lvii. 2, lxi. 5; Is. xxxi. 5, 6; Mal. iv. 2)—until, with most familiar tenderness, Jesus, here speaking in the person of Jehovah (which is to be observed, see especially Is. xxxi. 5), would spread His wings over them as a *hen* over her chickens, ere the birds of prey, as other eagles of judgment, come.[2] The wings are still spread even for the murderers of the Prophets, while Christ now speaks; even for the stoners of Stephen, as was shown in the case of Paul, He will still spread

[1] קִנָּהּ, *νοσσιὰν αὐτοῦ*, comp. Luke xiii. 34, as also both together, *τὰ νοσσία* and *ἡ νοσσιά*, Ps. lxxxiv. 4.

[2] Lange expresses the sense of my remark when he calls it the antithesis of *actively training* and *passively saving* love; only he does not specially enough bring out that the eagle also *bears* its young and *keeps* them from falling. It is rather a climax than an antithesis.

Hosted by Google

them out. But what He Himself has experienced will be the result, upon the whole; that, namely, which He expresses in the words, *Ye would not!* (Is. xxviii. 12, xxx. 15, and many places in the prophets.) The grace that still remains will indeed gather others in their place who *will;* but they who *would not* what Christ would fall into the condemnation. "The power of the Almighty appears as impotence before the obstinacy of the creature; and has only tears (Luke xix. 41) wherewith to overcome them." Whose *heart* dares here to answer with the dogmatics of the *head:* "Thy willing and drawing was not in earnest; Thy lamentation but a mockery and a sport; for Thine irresistible grace was not there to give them the power to will."

Vers. 38, 39. The second *Behold!* in addition to the first, ver. 34—the text of the prophecy that soon follows for the disciples (chap. xxiv.). The *house* is, in the first place, the Temple (Luke xi. 51, οἴκου); but, together with it, the entire holy city as *one* habitation, the whole country of which this is the metropolis; people and state, with all their possession and property, in the same wide sense as Acts i. 20; for, it is through the Temple that all subsists. Now it is no longer the Temple, no longer *God's* house; but, *your* house is left to *you*, as ye would have it. As yet in Matt. xxi. 13 it is *My* house—now, however, it is no longer so. Ἔρημος often elsewhere, and first of all, signifies *empty*, deprived of its proper contents (which then stand beside it in the Gen.); here, therefore, in the first place, *templum sine numine.* From this follows, indeed, the *desolation* and dispersion; because, when God departs only the punishment of sin remains,—as was already said to Solomon, 1 Kings ix. 7–9; see further Jer. xxii. 5, and especially Jer. vii. 6, 11, 13, 14, which prophecy now for the first time finds its second and complete fulfilment. Of course, the seat of Moses is thus thrown down; and the Rabbins of Babylon or Jerusalem are acknowledged no longer. Ἰδοὺ ἀφίεται—that begins at this moment: for, *I*, the Lord of the Temple, now go out and away from you! (chap. xxiv. 1). Although they saw Christ afterwards until His crucifixion, it was no longer in the Temple, but merely as a suffering Sacrifice. They will be compelled to *see* and to acknowledge Him in His judging power (chap. xxvi. 64); but otherwise no longer, the risen Saviour did not show

Hosted by Google

Himself to all the people. *Ye:* that is, again, the entire generation of those who obstinately reject Him, including also their posterity, as ver. 35 their forefathers; but not including all who do not persist in this rejection. Finally, however, there is here also a comforting "*until*" annexed to the long judgment upon the children and the children's children; as, in chap. xxii. 44, there was a threatening *until*, in connection with the priestly sitting of the King. That He will forsake them is therefore *not* the *last* word of Christ in this farewell! To understand what He here says only of a compelled acknowledgment of the coming Judge, is rendered impossible by the εὐλογημένος and the entire 118th Psalm; it can only mean,—Until ye (the late posterity of this generation) one day acknowledge Him who is now rejected, joyfully welcome Him as Messiah, and cry Hosanna in truth, not like the empty Hosanna a day or two before. Because it was empty and vain, Christ cannot express Himself thus, Until ye *again* say. He takes leave of them not merely "with the feeling that He can return to the Temple only as Messiah or never" (according to Hase); but with the clear-discerning prophecy that, one day, the people of God will honour Him. The still future restoration of Israel according to the flesh is announced throughout all the Old Testament, from Deut. iv. 30 on to Zechariah (for Malachi points back to the punishment upon the sinful people); he who has not read this is not yet able rightly to read the prophets. (2 Chron. xv. 3, 4; Hos. iii. 4, 5; Zech. xii. 10, xiv. 8–11.) But of a "*final* victory of the Saviour over *all* His adversaries, whom He so punishes as to *gain them to Himself*"—of this we find nothing in the whole Scripture, neither in Ps. cx., nor in the final close of Christ's discourse (Matt. xxv.), nor at the end of the Scripture, Rev. xxii. 15, 19, 21 (not μετὰ πάντων, but πάντων τῶν ἁγίων). Nor is the restoration of Israel by any means a typical pledge of this; as if there may not remain for many only the sentence, Ye would not! —all the less, since Scripture announces that restoration as contemporaneous with the judgment upon Gentile-Christendom.

Hosted by Google

CHRIST'S PROPHECY OF HIS COMING.

(Matt. xxiv. and xxv.)

This prophecy appears here, indeed, as an *answer* to a question of the disciples; but this question was itself called forth by the declaration of Christ—that of this beautiful and solid edifice not one stone should remain upon another. True it is, again, that the disciples drew from Christ this emphatic confirmation of what was said in chap. xxiii. 38, by a question addressed to Him (see especially Mark xiii. 1);—yet all the Lord's words were no other than a natural continuation of the preceding sayings, which denounced judgment upon Israel, Jerusalem, the Temple; nay, it was certainly provided for beforehand, that Christ should leave for *His disciples, i.e.*, His church in all future time, a complete prophecy of the *end*. As St John was directed to record, in harmony with his esoteric design, the last gracious promises of His *coming again to comfort* in the resurrection and by the Holy Spirit; so, on the other hand, the three other Evangelists must needs preserve the prophecy of Christ concerning His *coming again to judge*. And this has been done most fully by the Apostle Matthew, who alone, in chap. xxv., carries it to the last end.

He alone also gives us at once, in chap. xxiv. 3, the question of the disciples in its most exact form; thus enabling us to understand in its continuous unity the entire answer of Christ, as it runs on through two chapters. That which in Mark xiii. 4, and Luke xxi. 7, is mixed indistinguishably in a general ταῦτα and πάντα ταῦτα, is in St Matthew's account separated into *three parts*. The disciples ask: When shall this happen, that is, first of all, the *destruction of the Temple* with that judgment upon Israel, of which Thou hast assured us? Further: What shall be the sign of *Thy coming?* And, finally, What the sign of the *end of the world?* We must transpose ourselves into their ideas and conceptions, in order to see how much they did or did not understand of this their own question. They knew,

Hosted by Google

in the first place, with a certain measure of distinctness (although not clearly and surely), that the present lowly estate of Him who was come, who had so often spoken of His impending sufferings and death, was afterwards to be followed by another *coming of the Son of Man*, a manifestation and revelation in the *coming in of the kingdom*, the then only complete παρουσία τοῦ Χριστοῦ; of this He had spoken more than once, and very expressly in Matt. xvi. 28.[1] They knew, further, from what they had just heard (for they would scarcely of themselves have thought of Dan. ix. 26, 27, and therefore Christ afterwards reminds them of it), that an affliction and destruction, a *judgment upon Jerusalem* and Israel, was to break forth as the most immediate consequence of the rejection of Christ. When, accordingly, they put these two things together, it would remain uncertain to them how they stood related to each other; whether the destruction of Jerusalem would at the same time introduce the entire revelation and establishment of the kingdom—or (which was more in accordance with their Jewish conceptions), whether the *judgment upon the whole world*, with which they were familiar from the Old Testament, and which was in like manner announced by Jesus, would be coincident with that catastrophe. For this was the third thing which they knew of as future, as *to be*, to be *accomplished*. Christ indeed had, on one occasion, Matt. xvi. 27, 28, almost connected the general judgment with the coming of the kingdom; then again, at chap. xix. 28, He had spoken of a παλιγγενεσία, in which there would still be an Israel over which to rule in glory; in like manner, again, chap. x. 15, xi. 22, xii. 36, 41, 42, He referred to a "day of judgment," in such a manner that the judgment of the present Israel and of the whole world seemed to run into each other; finally, He had spoken, John v. 29, vi. 39, of the last general judgment

[1] True, there are those who will not admit this; with them, however, our believing interpretation, which interprets the *Scripture* from its own resources, has nothing further to do. Thus we find it taken for granted, strangely enough, that the disciples, as Jews, could think only of the destruction of Jerusalem; that the compiler (the so-called Matthew), afterwards interpolated the question concerning the παρουσία, etc. See a (successful!) prize essay by a young beginner of this class, (Kandidat) Rud. Hofmann, die Wiederkunft Christi und das Zeichen des Menschensohnes am Himmel.

Hosted by Google

as on a *last* day, with a general resurrection of the dead, and consequently as at the *end of the world* properly speaking, or of the present state of things, according to His own words, Matt. xiii. 39, 49. In vain would they endeavour to arrange all these old and new representations upon any definite theory of the *When* and *How*. As the Jewish people, in the time of Christ, knew or understood nothing of a twofold coming of the Messiah in lowliness and in glory, so the disclosures made by Jesus respecting His sufferings, and respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, had completely shattered their whole theory concerning the coming of the Messiah, and the end of the world.[1] Chiefly was "Jesus' announcement of sufferings an element, which threw into confusion all their eschatological conceptions, and, as it were, deranged the plan which they had sketched out."[2] Now, moreover, came the announcement of the judgment soon to fall upon Jerusalem, in addition to, and between these. How does *this* stand related to the looked-for advent of Christ, or the *manifestation of his kingdom;* and further, in what relation do these two stand to the *end of the world?* If at first they had thought thus: When Jerusalem falls, then will Christ come to build His kingdom, and to manifest Himself in His power—they would yet further be doubtful whether the end of the world would coincide with *this* advent; whether, in general, only one, or two, or three different catastrophes lay in the future? This is the sense of the question, only thus to be understood, which must have been preparing itself in the minds of the disciples for a considerable time before, and which now, when a fit occasion called it into utterance, found this natural expression. We have but little to say as to the ideas which the disciples entertained respecting the connection and course of the threefold coming about which they seem to ask; suffice, that they could have no definite ideas at all respecting the process of the three events which they therefore blend into one question. They perceive that this is their last time and opportunity for putting the question, which had long been pressing upon them: Help us out of our difficulty by a

[1] As Lange (iii. 215) aptly says.

[2] As Ebrard, in like manner, can say of the *question;* although afterwards he knows not how to arrange the *answer*.

Hosted by Google

decisive declaration respecting the *when* of all these things that are to come to pass.

How now does Christ answer? Because in reality the judgment upon Jerusalem and the last coming of Christ are "events that correspond to each other, of which the last is typified in the first" (as even Neander admits), Christ, therefore, separates what will be separated in the fulfilment, but at the same time, as *prophesying*, He views them together, just as the former prophets viewed even the first and second coming of Christ so together, that only in the light of the fulfilment can they be distinctly separated in the interpretation. For He who here speaks is Himself the last Prophet, and therefore continues the style of the prophetical word, and within the prophetical conditions of vision. It is only a misunderstanding, when many (as recently Dorner, Lange, and others) very strongly protest against all obscure mixture of future things in the prophesying of *Christ*, because He, standing high above the prophets, spoke with a clear and calm view of the events, and of the manner in which they should take place. Now, we do not hold that there is any obscurity in this prophecy of Christ; any more than there was in the old prophetical word, which was likewise perfect in its kind, according to the meaning of the *Holy Spirit*. But with all this, we do not see why Christ, notwithstanding the undisputed higher position that belonged to Him, should yet as *man* have *prophesied* essentially otherwise than by a contracting perspective view, such as is essential to *every* prophecy,—which does not as yet present history in detail. If any one will call this (with Wilh. Hofmann, Missionsfragen, 1, p. 40, comp. p. 104, 105) the "lower intuition which belonged to Him in His state of human abasement," we have nothing to say against it; but we cannot go so far (with the same writer) as to maintain that Christ has throughout viewed the destruction of Jerusalem and His own coming as not at all separate; for He knows and declares the distinction between them. Moreover, we decidedly deny, that He in any way conceived of all this as about to happen within the time of the generation then living. But we are almost anticipating, when all that we would say here is only by way of introduction.

So much is in our view certain, namely, that Christ in this

Hosted by Google

discourse *typically connects* events together (as is mentioned also by Hofmann in Weiss. und Erfull., and by Delitzsch, who in other respects differs from him); yet He Himself teaches us to perceive this. He lays it down that the destruction of Jerusalem is already *a* coming of Christ to judgment and setting up of His kingdom, but He immediately shows *behind this* yet *another* coming, nay, last of all with striking *distinction*, a final coming at the end of the world properly speaking. These *three* things, all which were rightly specified in the questions, He, in the corresponding answer, not less *perspectively* joins together (according to the manner of all prophecy hitherto) than distinguishes from each other, and shows them in the order of their succession. Only St Matthew has been guided by the Spirit to understand and communicate the entire answer, carried out to its conclusion, while St Mark and St Luke break off at an earlier point.[1] Chaps. xxiv. and xxv. at all events remain one whole, although Christ (probably) may not have spoken all in connection, as it is here written, without pauses here and there. We give, on a first survey, our view and arrangement founded upon what has been hitherto said, which we will afterwards explain and confirm in detail.

Let it be observed, however, beforehand, that by this threefold division we do not intend a strictly defining and adjusting chronology of the future (as Lange iii. 2, 1291 has misunderstood); but only a progression in the stages here placed in juxtaposition, in which, at the same time, the whole is always reflected in each. It is certainly *una res* of which Christ speaks,—this is our answer at present to the beginning of Dorner's treatise (de orat. Chr. eschatol.); yet it is twofold, inasmuch as Christ combines in one glance *two* separate future fulfilments. Thus in part was this prophecy read even by the Fathers; thus has it been always understood by the more deep-searching commentators, by all who have been profoundly versed in Scripture. The first principle of all prophetical interpretation, from 2 Sam. vii. downwards, requires it. That Christ did not speak here "pro-

[1] It is not to be supposed here that (as Neander thinks) the "erroneous mixture"—which does not at all exist—as being unworthy of Christ, is owing to the false understanding and reporting of the hearers.

Hosted by Google

miscuously, now of Jerusalem and the destinies of the Jewish people, and now of the end of the world," but of both these in and with each other, first the one, then the other coming more into prominence—*this* is not a mere "opinion of some," but the true *consensus* of all living tradition in the Church of the faithful, which it were very salutary for the master of the theological school to know and consider. By this, too, no *error* opticus is maintained, but the nature of all prophecy, which can only *indicate* more or less clearly the distinction of times, the difference between type and antitype, but which in general always comprises in one view what is manifold. With all this, it is true that the *intervalla seu incisurae* come more strongly into prominence in *Christ's* prophecy than in any other; but not as definitive epochs, for He, too, does not foretell events historically, and gives no decursum Christianæ religionis historicum. We wish afterwards to be rightly *understood!*

In the first place Christ speaks of the *destruction of Jerusalem; i.e.*, of course in order to denote the *when*, and first of all, of the intermediate period which precedes and prepares it, chap. xxiv. 1–28. *This* must be the first thing, and is so in reality; every interpretation which overlooks it must fail in arriving at a clear view of the whole. *In the second place* Christ speaks of His other and proper coming in the *manifestation of His Kingdom*, chap. xxiv. 29–44. Our interpretation will show that, notwithstanding the εὐθέως ver. 29, there is *here* an important point of separation, for which compare meanwhile Luke xxi. 24. The confusion which characterises the general interpretation has arisen from overlooking the prophetic manner of viewing the future, *i.e.*, the *perspective* and *typical* relation of great catastrophes *corresponding to each other*. For, the judgment upon Jerusalem is itself a first coming of the Son of Man; *only as such* has it its prophetical significance, *only in this light*, therefore, does Christ prophesy of it. There was then a typical *judgment of the world*, there appeared then typically the kingdom of Christ established among the nations in opposition to the rejected people; *i.e.*, the *two* following catastrophes, the more remote as well as the nearer, are to be seen preliminarily in the first, as we have already said on Matthew xvi. 28. Thus does our Lord regard it, and this is the reason why in chap. xxiv. 4–14, and

Hosted by Google

then again vers. 23–28, the expressions selected are so strong as in the fullest sense to apply only to the later coming, although between these, in vers. 15–25, He speaks quite plainly of Jerusalem.[1] Whilst, then, at ver. 29, the typical first coming passes quite out of view, and a *second coming of the Son of Man*, the gathering together of His elect into a finally established manifested *kingdom*, comes into the foreground (Luke xxi. 31), it is to be observed beforehand, with a view to the interpretation, that this also is not the last coming at the end of the world, but a *middle* coming of Christ, the acknowledgment of which alone opens up to us the entire prophetical system in this prophecy.[2] Here there is as yet nothing said of eternal punishment; but only of being left, of being shut out, or left without. The middle part of Christ's answer, which embraces this intermediate coming, extends onward to chap. xxv. 30; for here at first He gives the *prophecy itself* (already running out into a sort of parable) as yet in direct continuation of what goes before, chap. xxiv. 29–44. Then, however, He follows this by *three parables* which contain warnings to watchfulness and readiness, addressed to His disciples in particular, who wait for the coming *kingdom* (which is to be delayed much longer than they thought). He first represents in general, in the singular, the *faithful* and *wise* servant, in contrast with a bad servant (chap. xxiv. 45–51); the two parables that follow speak separately of the *wisdom* and *faithfulness*, and at the same time widen the view, so as to show the manifold variety of those who shall one day

[1] Here are formed almost of themselves, for every unbiassed and attentive reader, precisely the *three* cycles which afterwards Lange (iii. 215), agreeing with me, is obliged to admit! Peterson also arrives at the same conclusion, Lehre von der Kirche, iii. 685.

[2] Although this *intermediate* advent is a secret which is only now opening itself up to some, for the Church is slow to learn the word of prophecy. Certain things are disclosed only when the time comes for them, and it ought then to be least of all objected to these things that they were unknown to the doctrine of the Church hitherto, nay, that the latter has condemned (without distinguishing and inquiring aright) what, at an earlier period, pointed at these things. Zeller (in the Beugg. Monatsbl.) speaks very clearly and truly concerning these three comings of Christ, which perspectively cover each other, of which, according to him, the first was His coming into the world, Zeller im Beugg. Monatsbl. 1847. Nr. 10

Hosted by Google

stand before Him as their Lord, to enter in with Him or not, then in chap. xxv. 1–13, the *wise* virgins; finally, ver. 14, the *faithful* servants, who, however, are now (more definitely than chap. xxiv. 45) the *stewards* of the goods and gifts of their Lord.

From this intermediate coming of the Son of Man, which is meant in all the parables belonging to chap. xxiv. 39, there is now plainly *distinguished* (and this ought never to have been mistaken) the great *judgment-day* of the King, in full power and glory, for all nations, at the *end of the world* properly speaking:—the last coming of Christ on the last day, when an eternal separation shall be made between misery and blessedness, chap. xxv. 31–46. Only now is the answer complete; and the end of all prophecy is reached in a concluding word of our Lord, beyond which nothing more can or is to take place.[1]

THE FIRST ADVENT: DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM; DISPERSION OF ISRAEL.

(Matt. xxiv. 2, 4–28; Mark xiii. 2, 5–23; Luke xxi. 6, 8–24.)

The disciples, terrified by the word of Christ, chap. xxiii. 38, show to Him on leaving the Temple in the evening, after a day full of conflict and fatigue, the *building materials* of the Temple, which was still in course of being built (and was finished only

[1] We may here name, as agreeing with us, and that certainly from independent enlightenment, the beloved father Zeller, a man whose truly prophetic gift ought to be respected by his believing contemporaries. He divides just as we do: (1) the coming of the Lord to judge Judaism; (2) to judge degenerate anti-Christian Christendom; (3) to judge all heathen nations, the final judgment of the world. All which together are the coming again of Christ; and in respect of their similarity and diversity are most exactly recorded from the lips of our Lord by *St Matthew:* (a) chap. xxiv. 1-28; (b) chap. xxiv. 29, on to xxv. 30; (c) chap. xxv. 31-46.

Hosted by Google

a short time before its destruction!). Looking up at the spectacle they exclaim in their simplicity: *See*, what stones and what buildings! There were foundation stones forty yards broad, and forty-five yards in length, of the whitest marble; not merely with λίθοις καλοῖς, goodly stones, was Jehovah's sanctuary adorned, but also with ἀναθήμασι, consecrated gifts of piety and reverence, or even of acknowledgment by kings![1] Is all this really to be left desolate? Is nothing to be spared? But the Lord sternly answers as He had already spoken, Luke xix. 44; He charges them only again to *look at it aright*, as a glory that is doomed to the most complete destruction.[2] The imaginary difficulty of St Matthew's οὐ βλέπετε it has been sought to remove by all sorts of different constructions; but it is simply the same *question* which St Mark also has: Ye *see* all this, as ye think? It implies: But ye see it not yet aright, with your ποταποί and ποταπαί, just as if the destruction of such great *buildings* were scarcely conceivable: I say unto you with my Amen, which nothing can resist, that the days shall come when, of all these which ye now behold (Luke), *not one stone shall be left upon another*, as it had been laid in the building according to Hag. ii. 15. Compare also for the proverb, 2 Sam. xvii. 13. After the Jews were conquered, Titus commanded the soldiers to dig up the foundations of the whole city round about, as well as those of the Temple; although before this he would willingly have spared the latter, and repeatedly offered to do so.[3] Afterwards Turnus or Terentius Rufus tore up the foundation of the city with ploughshares, whereby certainly Micah iii. 12 was literally fulfilled. Let us, when we look upon the grandeur and decoration of our ecclesiastical and civil edifices, remember this fulfilled word of Jesus; and it will be a preservative against all

[1] They are mentioned before by St Luke in contrast with the widow's mite; Josephus gives a glittering catalogue of them. Even Cæsar Augustus had presented precious vessels as a gift of honour; Tacitus speaks of *immensæ opulentiæ templum*.

[2] Lange's interpretation of this question: "Do ye actually see all these things? To Me they already appear as a vanishing vision!" savours too much of our modern sentimentality.

[3] Κελεύει κατασκάπτειν . . . οὕτως ἐξωμάλισαν οἱ κατασκάπτοντες, ὡς μηδὲ πώποτ' οἰκισθῆναι πίστιν ἂν ἔτι παρασχεῖν τοῖς προσελθοῦσιν. Joseph. Bell. Jud. vii., i. 1.

Hosted by Google

false admiration of their earthly glory, against all undue æsthetic dependence upon it, and against the Romish tendencies to which it may minister. Let us view the entire edifice of the world in the light of this which has been said of it beforehand: *not one stone upon another!* 2 Pet. iii. 10, 11.

A while after this first and unconditionally decisive word, which gave the disciples enough to occupy their thoughts, Christ sate upon the *Mount of Olives*, from which the principal view of the Temple was to be had, even to its interior;—on the same Mount of Olives from which the destroying host afterwards poured in upon the devoted city (comp. Zech. xiv. 4, 5, of the more remote future). There the disciples, no longer contradicting the *fact*, now bring forward their question formerly raised respecting the *When* of the great catastrophe, its connection with the coming again of Christ (Matt. xxiii. 39), and the end of the world. The three Evangelists do not indeed literally agree in the answer; our Lord's words were copious and free, so that each one might preserve and bring forward something different from the others. Yet the agreement so predominates, that we are warranted in arranging what is given by the others according to the plan of St Matthew, and certainly must not entertain the idea of two different discourses.[1] Christ, we may be sure, did not—contrary to the whole nature of the prophetic intuition, which advances from the near to the remote—leap backwards and forwards from one thing to another, and speak *first* of the last end, then of Jerusalem, then again of the last end, but if Matt. vers. 15–22 (parallel with Luke vers. 20–24) refers to the judgment of Jerusalem, then vers. 4–14 and 23–38 in like manner refer, at all events *in the first place*, to the same event. The disciples summing up all in their indefinite question desired a σημεῖον, *one sign*. He gives them for the first various preparatory signs, which will occur similarly as presages of the first

[1] We do not with Richter attach any value to the assertion in Brandt's Schullehrerbibel (where there are so many arbitrary assertions), viz.: "that in St Luke Christ speaks *at an earlier period* and of Jerusalem; afterwards again similarly, but no longer of Jerusalem!" We notice this as a caution against such exegetical caprice, adopted solely to avoid the typical double sense. Although Luther had recourse to a similar expedient, viz.: That St Matthew and St Mark throw together what St Luke alone clearly separates in the true order.

Hosted by Google

and second coming; until, at ver. 30, there appears the one last *sign* for the visible coming of the Son of Man (analogous with ver. 15, for the preliminary, not yet personal, coming to judgment). Therefore in Matt. vers. 4–15 are given the signs of the destruction of Jerusalem drawing near; but these are portrayed in colours so strong, that this first period must be seen to be only the *type* of the latter. If, at chap. x., we found in a similar gradation of perspective vision, that all that was spoken literally of that first sending out applies spiritually to the more remote future, so here, this entire portion of the discourse, chap. xxiv. 4, 28, has certainly already a real *double sense*. It is no result of chance (to speak foolishly), that everything which is here mentioned was somehow actually fulfilled already at that time; but still less is it to be denied, that the fulfilment which entirely corresponds to it lies as yet in the future. *Hence*, ver. 6, τὸ τέλος is parallel with the συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος of the question—but at ver. 8, the "sorrows" are again parallel with the great "affliction" ver. 21, and in the οὖν, ver. 15, there is an undeniably direct connection with the τὸ τέλος, at ver. 14, and again, at ver. 23 a simply continuative τότε. He who will break this continuous connection, must have recourse to artificial interpretation in one place or another; the only true key to the understanding of the whole lies in perceiving, that our Lord speaks prophetically *of the earlier as a type of the later*. Advancing from the most general to the most concrete, He mentions, vers. 4–15, those signs which, as they must and shall precede the end of the world, shall also precede precisely on that account also the end of the Jewish nation, and in these He comes ever nearer to the event: first in the fallen, desolate, disordered Israel (which even now has become a nation *without*), there will be false Christs or Saviours—then in the same, and in the Gentile world, ever increasing calamities of wars, with accompanying throes of nature —then, even in the *Church* of God properly so called, which exists as the kernel to be saved, offence because of persecution, and falling away, likewise false prophets—*yet* with all this, the continued preaching of the Gospel in all the world! Hereupon Christ specifies the most immediate, *nearest*, sign of the coming end, according to Daniel (ver. 15). The *judgment of the destruction itself* is, from ver. 16 onwards, so represented that the

Hosted by Google

disciples of Christ are directed to *flee* (vers. 16–20), then they are *again warned* against falling away in the great tribulation (vers. 21–26), finally, the sudden unmistakable *coming of the Son of Man* for the salvation of His people, and judgment on the outcasts, is indicated vers. 27, 28. The direction to flee runs thus:—Flee in haste, without turning back, or looking back, yet not without foresight and prayer! The warning against falling away is repeated, because it is now certainly meant *at the same time* to apply to the *interval* from the judgment of Jerusalem on to the second, more proper, coming of the Son of Man; yet the double τότε, vers. 21 and 23, evidently connects, in the first place, again with vers. 19 and 16, and can only be separated therefrom by departing from the natural interpretation.[1] The great tribulation will threaten danger also to you *elect—therefore* beware ye *elect* of the false Christs, and false prophets (vers. 5 and 11 being now joined together), as on account of the danger that threatens you (vers. 23, 24), so on account of the warning against this which ye have received from Me, vers. 25, 26.

Vers. 4, 5. Beware! Take heed! Watch over yourselves, that ye may be delivered, may be saved, when I really come. That remains, generally speaking, the ground tone of the whole answer, with which it begins here and closes at ver. 42, 44,—to resume and prosecute it then in parables. Mark ver. 9, βλέπετε δὲ ὑμεῖς ἑαυτούς as 2 John ver. 8. The disciples inquired respecting the πότε, the *when*; Christ, however, gives no proper answer to this throughout the entire discourse (in spite of the oft-recurring τότε): see rather vers. 36, 42, 25, 13, and mark the last ὅταν δὲ ἔλθῃ, *when* the Son of Man shall come, ch. xxv. 31. He only gives *signs* for the different analogous periods, which manifoldly fulfil themselves; in order that His people, expecting Him in each of these periods, may be on their guard. (This is what St Mark means by the ἤρξατο ver. 5 viz.:—He began at first with something quite different from the desired answer.) The impulse of our inquiry concerning Christ's second

[1] For so must we call it when Ebrard (Kritik. d. ev. Gesch. p. 617) makes the τότε (which is yet, since ver. 16, only one and the same) to denote the time *after* the shortening of the tribulation, and declares this to be the only true sense.

Hosted by Google

coming should not be curiosity about the time, but the desire to be found to have persevered in fidelity before Him. But as, on the one hand, the near expectation of the *true* coming One is helpful to this, so, on the other, the warning against the *false Christs* is yet indispensable; hence the assurance which, while it pacifies, urges to still persevering faithfulness, viz.: *I come not so very soon!*—it will yet be a while ere this, and there lies in the interval much deceiving confusion of falsehood, and violent breaking out of sin, as a necessarily preparatory development. 2 Thess. ii. *This*, therefore, is the first fundamental idea of the answer. Many shall come, not merely ἐν, but ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου, personally assuming My name to themselves. The natural, most immediate, punishment of Israel for the rejection of the true Christ, was the being given up to lying Saviours and Deliverers, as was already foretold, John v. 43. In every period of corruption, and of calamity as its consequence, this symptom of lying consolations and promises repeats itself; hence, at the period of the captivity, false prophets had abounded, Jer. xxix. 8, 9, xiv. 13; Ezek. xiii. As the preliminary and most immediate fulfilment, we are not so much to understand *Goetæ*, such as Simon Magus, and deceitful wonder-workers in general (of whom Josephus is full), as rather those who promised redemption to the people Israel (Luke xxiv. 21), *i.e.*, would become their Messiahs, Saviours, and Liberators. This is what Christ means, and it matters nothing although no one may have directly said: *I am the Christ.* Josephus also relates enough about Saviours of this class.[1] But while our Lord so decidedly warns against them, He lays it down (which is not to be overlooked) as a main point, that *His* true coming will bring no outward salvation even to this Israel; that the judgment over it remains inevitable; and that for His disciples, as He afterwards says, only *to flee* is appointed. He *therewith* points at the same time beyond, to a later coming, when the fulfilment, found before only in part and preliminarily, recurs in a fuller and more pro-

[1] Of Theudas Arch. xx. 5, 1 (remarkable on account of Acts v. 36, 37), who would lead his followers through the Jordan; of another, xx. 8, 10; of those who falsely prophesied of Divine help even to the last moment, Bell. Jud. vi. 5, 1. All these appeared, at least before the Gentiles, in *Christ's* name: Judaei *impulsore Chresto* assidue tumultuantes.

Hosted by Google

per form. Already does the expression *and the time draweth near*, which St Luke adds, point beyond to this farther sense.

Vers. 6–8. We have here the general signs of the preparation of all great catastrophes; as surely to be found then on the more limited scale, in so far as the Jewish horizon represented the orb of the world, as afterwards on a greater scale, according to the import of the expressions which typically point to the *end* properly speaking. War in the immediate neighbourhood, ever growing alarms in the distance, terrifying rumours of war, commotions and tumults of the people against each other:—all this is in reality, *on the small scale*, the picture of the time as described by Josephus, which, with every year, became more exactly applicable. The *wars* were certainly, at that time, more of the nature of insurrections, tumults here and there (Luke, ἀκαταστασίαι), manifold commotions and massacres, for example between the Syrian and Jewish inhabitants in the cities (ἔθνος ἐπὶ ἔθνος), such as are to be read of in Joseph. Bell. Jud. ii. 17, 10, 18, 1–8, where it is said "every city was divided into two opposing hosts." Besides, in Italy also, Otho and Vitellius strove for the kingdom—βάσιλεία ἐπὶ βασιλείαν, if we would interpret quite exactly; the entire discourse, however, rather (as Is. xix. 2) denotes by expressions which typically point further, the general commotion and convulsion, also the internal distraction of the Jewish people raging against themselves. (For the rest, what Bengel finely observes is presupposed: Christiani magis *audiunt* bella quam gerunt.) *Famines and pestilences* may be regarded as an expression proverbial[1] of such times (2 Chron. xx. 9; Jer. xiv. 12, xxi. 7, θάνατος and λιμός together; also as a proverb: μετὰ λιμὸν λοιμός). But there are not wanting historical notices of famines and pestilences in that time. Under Claudius alone there were four several famines in Palestine, Greece, and Rome (*in divers places*); compare also Acts xi. 18. Tacitus (Annal. xvi. 13) mentions a plague (A.D. 66) in which during a single autumn in Rome 30,000 men were swept off. There were earthquakes, A.D. 60, in Asia Minor, according to Phlegon; A.D. 63 in Campania; under Claudius in Crete according to Philostratus; at Rome A.D. 51; in Phrygia at Apamea and Laodicea;

[1] Niger, who was murdered by the Zelots, uttered this curse upon the people at his death: λιμόν τε καὶ λοιμόν. Jos. B. J. iv. 6, 1.

Hosted by Google

again in Campania, according to Tacitus and Suetonius; as also in Judea, according to Josephus iv. 4, 5. All this we merely mention, in opposition to those commentators who would entirely sever the prophecy of Christ from its nearest fulfilment, in which is the pledge of a further fulfilment. St Luke (who, ver. 10, indicates by "then said He unto them" a short pause in the discourse calling attention anew) adds *fearful sights* and *great signs from heaven;* but while this points indeed to the more completely corresponding future (Luke xxi. 25), such signs are not wanting even before the destruction of Jerusalem. The accounts which Josephus gives of these[1] obtain from Christ's word a credibility not to be slighted; as further (we hesitate not to say it), from the analogy of the typically corresponding times, a remarkable light falls back from this passage upon those histories in the second book of Maccabees. (See chap. ii. 22, iii. 24, v. 2, x. 29, xi. 8; there promising victory, here threatening destruction.) Yet all these are only *preliminary signs*, says Christ, all this is not yet *τὸ τέλος*, the last and proper end; because the end of Jerusalem is only a sign of the *συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος*, all this will *again* occur quite differently in the last time. Compare Dan. xi. 27, 35 for this special expression; as also Jer. li. 45, 46, for the entire prophetical description; especially, however, the remarkably corresponding prophecy of Azariah the son of Oded to king Asa, 2 Chron. xv. 5–7, which evidently extends to the distant future. With profound significance does our Lord finally denote all this by the expression *ἀρχὴ ὠδίνων*, *beginning of pangs*, in conformity with the Jewish doctrine concerning the

[1] Who does not leave unnoticed the *σημεῖα καὶ τέρατα* which happened before the destruction of the city: A comet which hung over it during a whole year; a light in the night around the Altar and Temple, a sacrificial cow which dropt a lamb in the Temple, both at the Passover season; the opening of a door in the Temple of itself; chariots and besieging hosts in the clouds; the mighty voice in the Temple as of a great multitude: Let us go hence! at the time of the Pentecost; finally, *τὸ δὲ τούτων φοβερώτερον*, that a certain man from the country, named *Jesus*, began four years before the breaking out of the war, in the midst of peace and plenty, to cry out *Woe to Jerusalem!* and, notwithstanding his being chastised and scourged as a "madman," continued this for seven years and five months—till the end of the siege, when with a last *Woe also to me!* a stone that was thrown killed him. Bell. Jud. vi. 5, 3. Even Tacitus Hist. V. mentions similar circumstances.

Hosted by Google

חֲבָלִי מָשִׁיחַ; for there must be a *regeneration* before the *end* can come, and the growing outbreaks of sin are viewed as a necessary development, in order to the ripening of men and nations for judgment and redemption. A death struggle now already typically goes before, as the birth pang of the *new* Jerusalem; just as at last heaven and earth are destroyed ere the new world is born.

Vers. 9–13. As Christ, at chap. x., had already given similar directions to the Apostles, to be observed by them until the Son of Man should *come;* so the manifest repetition of them here is proof that He speaks, at all events in the first place, of the foretokens of this nearer coming. The direct address to the disciples, in the constant *ye* and *you*, is unnatural on the supposition of a prophecy at once passing to the remote future; but, on the other hand, it is most appropriate if we suppose that He reminds them of what had been said to them before, and the fulfilment of which is now nearer at hand. As in the sayings of John xv. 26 to xvi. 4 the Apostles are first of all meant, so here also, where St Mark and St Luke repeat in a still more detailed form what was said on the occasion of their first mission,—and in particular the direction to rely on the promised Spirit when called to defend themselves, and the citation from Micah. The particulars have already been considered at chap. x. It is evidently indicated by the "*before all these*" of Luke ver. 12 that this persecuting and hating of the witnesses and confessors of Christ, even to the death, was to begin very soon, —before the other greater commotions and terrors should come, —as the first principal sign of the course of the kingdom henceforward, through long afflictions, to a late completion of victory. As a testimony unto *them* to whom ye preach:—so also St Mark, as in Matthew chap. x. and again xxiv. 14. But St Luke gives the other side, viz.: it shall turn for a testimony to *you;* compare the similar expression, Phil. i. 19. The disciples should know in all their persecution that their Lord was truly with them, giving them mouth and wisdom, so that kings and princes must in their consciences bow before their testimony to the truth, even as Pilate before Christ. So Paul in bonds makes Felix tremble! The θανατώσουσιν ἐξ ὑμῶν—*some of you shall they cause to be put to death*—of St Luke is the more definite inter-

Hosted by Google

pretation of the ἀποκτενοῦσιν ὑμᾶς in St Matthew; for this limitation was certainly promised also at Matt. xvi. 28. We have only to consider the growing general hatred towards the Christians; and the persecution of Nero, in which, to speak with Tertullian, it had already become a *nominis* prælium, a war against a *name:* Matt. *of all nations* (chap. x. 22, only πάντων) is, exactly as at ver. 14, a strong expression for the first fulfilment, as typical of the future fulfilment. As regards Luke, ver. 18, see already on Matthew x. 30: it is meant to be said here, as there, first of all:—Nothing shall be done without the will of *God;* therefore, also, nothing that shall issue in your destruction; all things shall tend to your salvation (Phil. i. 19–21), even *although* ye should be killed![1] And then the word, as it respects those who should remain, passes over to ver. 19; and it was specially fulfilled when, in the destruction of Jerusalem, no Christian, so far as we know, perished.

For the rest, as Matthew (who, instead of more detailed repetitions, preserves what is properly new in the present discourse) shows, the persecution of the name of Christ is here only a basis for the transition to an announcement of that *falling away* in the Church which should be the result of that persecution. As surely as the words of vers. 10–12 reach further beyond, so surely were they already at that time preliminarily fulfilled; we have only to think of the Demases in the early Church, the strong words in 2 Tim. iv. 16, the entire epistle to the Hebrews, with its much-needed warning against falling away. Because ver. 10 speaks of the Christians, we must of course look for the *false prophets* (ver. 11) also in Christendom; ver. 12 adds forthwith the effects of the false *doctrine* in the bad *life.* They are the ψευδοδιδάσκαλοι, analogous to the old ψευδοπροφήταις 2 Pet. ii. 1; 1 John iv. 1, and the ψευδαπόστολοι 2 Cor. xi. 13. In those who are led away the ἀνομία, the iniquity, then increases—that is, in the present fulfilment, the last open outbreak and manifestation of finished sin and selfishness, the *antinomianism,* by many at this day (for example Goschel) exposed with all severity in its true light (comp. 2 Tim. iii. 1 ss.). The

[1] "Whatever may outwardly befall you, even death itself, will as little affect your real eternal welfare, as if not even a hair of your head perished!" —V. Gerlach.

Hosted by Google

transgressors prevail (Dan. viii. 23); therefore also love in the loving, in whom it ought yet ardently to burn, *grows cold;* the corrupting mass infects also the little band (which is here remarkably denoted by τῶν πολλῶν); brotherly distrust and anxious self-concern predominate; nay at last *all* the virgins become more or less drowsy and slumbrous. But the Judge and Saviour deals not so sharply with the weak: although a certain waxing cold of the first love is predicated of *the many, i.e.*, actually of all—He shall and will yet find such as endure even to the end. Compare again chap. x. 22, 23; and note that *the end* can in the first place only be intended as there: it is the antithesis of the *beginning*, ver. 8; and as such glances already to the last end, which at ver. 14 is still more definitely viewed, while it means in the first place the end of the great tribulation of Jerusalem, vers. 21, 22, for those who are preserved till then. For those who are killed or who die earlier, it is certainly death (Rev. ii. 10), according as the end of the *temptation* is appointed to each. Our Lord in Luke xxii. 28, 29, typically acknowledged His disciples' *having continued stedfast*, so as to receive the appointment to the kingdom; and the same ever goes on in all *temptations*, which have always again a nearer *end*. The most distinct explanation stands at Luke ver. 19, where the possessing and preserving of their *souls* includes the spiritual and bodily *salvation* in one[1] (Matt. ver. 22). The end is *patience*, the armour of the saints (Rev. xiii. 10, xiv. 12), as the beginning is *caution*, ver. 4.

Ver. 14. In spite, however, of all persecution, nay of all offence and growing cold in the Church of Christ itself, the preaching of the Gospel to the world yet goes on unhindered; and this is a wonderfully fulfilled sign and testimony of the grace of the Lord in His kingdom. Here the great similarity of the earlier period with its antitype at the last time was strongest, and therefore the prophesying word almost entirely anticipates; this we by no means deny. Vers. 4–14 is correctly viewed by Dorner as a sort of general exordium. (Lange: "A representation of the entire course of the world, even to the *end*, in its general character.") It is quite true, that here we have only

[1] Not merely according to Thiess: "Wait patiently, it will not cost you your life."

Hosted by Google

admonitions, without any reference to chronology. But Dorner misapprehends the typical double sense, as if τὸ τέλος could *only* be the same with the συντέλεια τοῦ αἰῶνος. For whilst, in the glance at the last end, this τότε ἥξει τὸ τέλος has almost literally extended thus far, immediately upon this the return is made by the οὖν, ver. 15, again to the *typical* end (Ezek. vii. 2, 3, 6 בָּא הַקֵּץ); and we must even in the former case not overlook the first fulfilment. Matt. chs. xxvi. 13, and xxviii. 19 reach indeed further; yet, *in a certain measure*, already in the apostolic period, even before the end came upon Jerusalem, all the Gentiles in the then *orbis terrarum* had heard the testimony of the Gospel. Mark, ver. 10, puts this word (εἰς πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, as it were "into all nations") in strict proximity with the preaching of the Apostles, and thereby points us again back to Matt. x. 18. Thus did the Apostles themselves regard it, so that by the preaching of the Gospel before Cæsar *all the Gentiles* heard it (2 Tim. iv. 17); and the Gospel had come unto all the world, to every creature under heaven, Col. i. 6, 23.[1] One has only to learn from the history of the Church and of missions the wide spread of the Gospel after a very few years, in order to understand the *typical* truth of this particular![2] It was indeed only a typical truth; Acts viii. 4 was ever more strongly repeated,[3] and will be repeated even to the last end. Still, the type shows us, on the limited scale, that we are not to expect, even at the last future, the general conversion of all nations; but only an analogous *preaching* for a *testimony*, yet so that everywhere the message

[1] But not Rom. x. 18, where, according to the sense of the Psalm, the revelation of nature is to be understood in opposition to ver. 19; see my Andeutungen für glaüb. Schriftverst. p. 345.

[2] Where, however, we must not (as Roos, die Lehre J. Christi p. 423) press the letter, as if actually at that time, perhaps in the last year before the end of Jerusalem, "the whole of the then known world" had heard the Gospel; all that can be said is that we have no information of such having been the case. This is quite as wrong as on the other hand to reduce the expression "all nations" to a too narrow sense, as for example in a recent essay: Das prophetische Wort, etc., S. 31, 37.

[3] Again, after the destruction of Jerusalem, and the triumph of Vespasian, the Gospel first broke out with increased force. Rutilius: Atque utinam nunquam Judæa subacta fuisset, Pompeii bellis imperioque Titi! Latius excitæ pestis contagia serpunt, Victoresque suos natio victa premit.

Hosted by Google

will be heard. Nay, this expression is used in other places generally where the testimony is *not* received. When the two connected signs in their strangely contradictory coincidence reach their fullest manifestation,—viz. the apostasy of Christendom and the spread of missions—then cometh the end. Then will another abomination of desolation in the holy place be seen, of which that at Jerusalem was only the remote type.

Ver. 15. From this verse onward to ver. 28 Christ certainly speaks chiefly of the signs of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem; He portrays this however "*only as* the sign and beginning of the judgment of the world." In this we quite agree with Lange; we find in it, however, over and above, a special *typical* significance, pointing to the *last* days of the second fulfilment. That our Lord by no means sums up, in the οὖν, the entire distraction and desolation of Israel (and the Christian Church?) hitherto described,—but must mean something singular, special, something that was strikingly perceptible,—is clear first of all from the ὅταν δὲ ἴδητε, *when ye see.* He appeals thereby to a specially remarkable coincidence of what happened with a long existing, although little understood *prophecy;* for He will teach us here that, as His own forewarning word (ver. 25), so also the Old Testament prophecy, and in general all that has been given by God to His people, is to be a light and consolation to us in the evil time. He names Daniel the *prophet,* perhaps not without reference to the place that was assigned him among the כְּתוּבִים; He confirms so clearly and earnestly the authenticity of the book existing in the canon under the name of this man, that every other result of a learned criticism is refuted by anticipation; He adds even an emphatic challenge attentively to read and *rightly to understand* the prophetic word, in order to see that its fulfilment has not been omitted. For, that the parenthetical remark has been inserted by *two* Evangelists, as an addition of their own, remains so inexplicable and unexampled, that we, agreeing with Hengstenberg, cannot enough wonder how Bengel could have entertained such a supposition.[1] The

[1] Lange unfortunately still sees in this merely "a later note;" his opinion is at last (iii. 217) thus expressed, "the Evangelist remarks this

Hosted by Google

challenge comes from the mouth of Christ, and calls to the right understanding of the dark word (just as in 2 Tim. ii. 6); it refers also very evidently to the passages in Daniel himself (Dan. xii. 4, 10), which speak of the right understanding of his prophecies, only at a later period fully disclosed (as in chap. ix. 23, 25 Daniel himself was summoned to consider and understand).

It is not necessary that we should enter at large upon the exegesis of Daniel as a whole; it would lead us too far to do anything more than merely state our confirmed opinion. As Daniel in various senses prophesies of Antiochus Epiphanes as the type of Antichrist, so Christ here inserts and demonstrates the intermediate fulfilment when Jerusalem was destroyed; and by way of exact confirmation connects this with the discourse of Daniel in chap. ix. which treats of that event. The Prophet had, in chap. viii. 1–9, announced almost historically the nearest fulfilment at that time in its entire development; then however in vers. 10, 11, 17, 19, he received definite hints to the effect that this vision extends, at the same time, to a later time of the end. In chap. ix. he receives, immediately upon his prayer, the very remarkable determination of time which finds its limit in the days of Christ and the destruction of Jerusalem; *to this*, therefore, first of all Christ here points in the βδέλυγμα τῆς ἐρημώσεως (LXX. ix. 27, τῶν ἐρημώσεων, comp., however, literally 1 Macc. i. 54). Now, it is true that this rendering and construction is against the original text, in which כְּנַף belongs certainly as Stat. constr. to שִׁקּוּצִים; but in the further extending view of the whole it retains its truth, as we shall soon see. We are quite agreed with the more recent commentators that the passage in Daniel

by way of interpolation," without noticing the fact that *two* Evangelists must have inserted the same remark. In like manner Alford speaks of an "ecclesiastical note," which has come into the text in the same way as the Doxology in the Lord's Prayer. We see no ground for such a supposition, no reason at all against its being taken simply as the word of Christ Himself. We think it quite *natural*, with Braune, that as elsewhere when He wished to awaken and fix attention He said, "who hath ears to hear, let him hear!" so here also He should say, "whoso readeth, let him give heed!" Nay, we say further with Braune, "This direction is still always the best introduction to the prophetical word"—namely, as an admonition carefully to *read*, with *attentive observation* of the corresponding signs of history.

Hosted by Google

is to be read "upon the pinnacle the abomination:" that is, Even unto or upon the *Temple* with its pinnacles (which at the same time may mean the pinnacle of Jerusalem), desecrated by abomination, the *desolator* comes. Therefore, only an abomination already being fulfilled, affecting the sanctuary, and bringing desolation as its punishment, can here be meant by Christ—quite in analogy with the idea which at ver. 28 is otherwise expressed: When the corruption and the abomination is consummated, even into the innermost sanctuary, then must the dispersion come! The ὅταν ἴδητε of St Matthew and St Mark, therefore, is really not one and the same with the ὅταν ἴδητε of St Luke; and the neglect of which has confused many commentators.[1] St Luke preserves a word of Christ which was certainly *also* spoken, and which specifies the *outward* sign of the encompassing besieging army (Luke xix. 43); while St Matthew and St Mark give another word respecting the *inner* sign, which already stands *in the holy place*. This can only mean the *Temple*, even in the circumlocution of St Mark: ὅπου οὐ δεῖ, where truly something else than *abomination* ought to be! It is wrong therefore to seek this abomination in the Roman military badges, eagles, and imperial figures on their standards; and to explain the τόπος ἅγιος of all the country round about Jerusalem (Ps. lxxix. 3; 1 Macc. x. 31), chiefly the Mount of Olives; or even (comp. Ps. lxxiv. 4) to mention the setting up of the imperial statue in the Temple, which was only attempted a considerable time before. For, the abomination is, according to Daniel, set up by Israel itself; this alone corresponds as, on the one hand, to the earlier analogy before the captivity (2 Kings xxi. 2–7; Ezek. v. 11, vii. 8, 9, viii. 6–16), so, on the other hand, to the later fulfilment in the antitype, in which *both coincide*, in which the Antichrist itself proceeds from the midst of Christendom, and sets itself with its idolatry in the Temple of God. (2 Thess. ii. 4.) What, in the faintly preliminary fulfilment of this sense, the abomination in the Temple at that time, properly speaking,

[1] Lange also has not yet rid himself of this. Even Delitzsch, with Hofmann, sees in Luke xxi. 20 the "authentic *interpretation* of the words of Christ;" but understands only the idolatrous signs of the heathen army which the Romans brought into the Temple. (Luther. Zeitschr. 1850. 3. p. 487.)

Hosted by Google

was, we can no longer know; it must, however, have been an aggravation and consummation of unholy character and conduct in the sanctuary, in the highest degree manifest to the Christians, which they could not but *see*. The first fulfilment of this particular is concealed by history in order to point us to the second. V. Gerlach, agreeing with us, understands, "Such an abomination as must necessarily draw desolation after it;"—but he is wrong when he affirms that this is therefore nothing definite, and only expresses the culminating point of corruption. So little is a striking special fulfilment here, as often times, excluded by the general sense, which is also true, that the latter must rather, according to prophetico-historical law, culminate and become *visible* in a last detail.

Further, it is not to be overlooked that our Lord does not literally render that passage Dan. xi. 27; but He retains the βδέλυγμα ἐρημώσεως, so as at the same time (which Hengstenberg and Hävernick overlook or deny) to connect with it one or two later passages where this expression actually occurs. Daniel, chap. x.–xii., carries out the prophecy more particularly. After chap. x., which prepares the way for what follows, we find in chap. xi. Antiochus Epiphanes standing evidently as the type of a future destroyer (the Antichrist); and in such a manner that, according to the manner of prophetical discourse, in vers. 31–35 the reference to the first predominates, while in vers. 36–45, where the view extends further to the "other time," the reference to the last predominates. Finally, in chap. xii., the whole closes with the view reaching furthest of all to the final decision and redemption. Here now, in chap. xi. 31, it is said that the arms of the enemy shall pollute the holy place, shall set up (properly *give, i.e.*, render by way of recompense) the *desolating abomination;* and in chap. xii. 11 there is again the retrospect to this βδέλυγμα ἐρημώσεως. Only the last passage entirely corresponds to the citation of Christ; and its sense is, that abomination brings along with it the abomination, the *desecration* of the holy place by Israel necessarily completes itself in vengeance, and represents itself in the *desolation* of the same by the enemy. Was not this also the innermost sense of the ἀφίεται ἔρημος, chap. xxiii. 38—is not this alone what fully corresponds to the case? Heathenish violation of the Temple

Hosted by Google

is already present, and heathenish violation yet comes; for, vengeance is to manifest the guilt, and only recompensingly to complete it. Thus also we fully understand how the two signs, which meet together in St Matthew and St Luke, belong to each other as one ὅταν ἴδητε; and βδέλ. ἐρημ. is the abomination which brings with it the desolation, because it is already so itself.

Vers. 16–18. If what is said here is to receive in the second fulfilment (as may certainly be possible enough) a significance literally corresponding beyond expectation, we must seek it in the circumstances of a church of Christians assembled again at the *last* time in *Judea*; for there the second catastrophe is to concentrate itself. With this agrees that ancient tradition (mentioned by Dorner, S. 7), that the Antichrist shall set up the abomination in the restored Temple. Who knows whether this be only a *dream* of the fancy! It reaches, however, into the uncertainties of prophetic vision, with which we shall not, as many do, too confidently meddle; so much only is certain, that Christ now speaks quite *plainly* of the *first* fulfilment.[1] As already in chap. x. 23 flight was recommended to the Apostles, as afterwards in Luke xvii. 31, similar expressions were used in reference to the "coming of the Son of Man," there indefinitely spoken of, so now the faithful are enjoined to flee out of Jerusalem and Judea, in evident *antithesis* to the subsequent *gathering together* of the elect, ver. 31. Consequently, *this* catastrophe is not yet the last gathering and redemption,—this is precisely what these words would intimate. The obdurate Jews hoped even to the last for succour and help; the Christians, warned beforehand by their Lord, were to flee:—not, however, until the end actually comes; previous to this they were to endure in patience. In St Luke, ver. 21, the expressions are somewhat differently applied, with the same sense, Delay no longer! The mountains are the neighbouring mountainous country from

[1] Proceeding from this hint of ours, Steinmeyer (in the Vortrag vor der Berliner Conferenz Ev. K. Z. 1849, Nr. 70) seeks to open up more exactly the reference of the type to the after-time; yet we think that his prophetical hermeneutics, always fundamentally true, lean too much to idealistic generality. I find in the background rather a strictly *historical* parallel.

Hosted by Google

ancient times proverbial as a place of refuge; although Christ prepared for His gathered ones another Zoar in Pella.[1] So suddenly will the destruction come at last (ver. 27), that he who happens then to be on the flat roof must not descend by the inner staircase to the house, nay, scarcely by the outer stair to the street, but, where possible, at once hasten over the roofs, and so to the city wall; he who has laid aside his garment in order to labour in the fields must not turn again for it in order to take it with him. It matters nothing now whether or not thou hast thy garments, if only thou escapest thyself, and bearest thy life for a prey! (Jer. xlv. 5.) This, of course, at the same time typically denotes that earnestness which turns not to look at or seize anything, but is intent only on saving the soul from the judgment (Luke xvii. 32).[2]

Vers. 19, 20. This haste which leaves all behind, *in the last moment of decision* when all that remains is *flight*, does not however exclude a preceding supplication for mitigation of the evil, —which was to be expected, indeed, long before it happened,— does not exclude a taking heed to and attentively considering the circumstances, with an appeal to God in prayer. As on a later occasion (Luke xxiii. 29) Christ said, with pathetic tenderness, when speaking of the tribulation upon Jerusalem: *Blessed* then are they who have no children born, no sucklings to save, or, because that will be impossible, to lament—so He says the same here from the other side with a severe *Woe*. It is like all that goes before, spoken partly in the way of proverbial example, partly also literally, of the distress which the faithful share in common with the judged, while they flee from it:— pregnant persons and nurses will be much encumbered in their flight! Then He adds another word, which refers to the precautionary prayer against an *unseasonable time*. This general idea receives a twofold expression, namely, *bad weather* (χειμών as chap. xvi. 3) and the *Sabbath;* for, the one is an example of

[1] Τὰ ὄρη in all the three Evangelists, so that Steinmeyer only by a play of fancy can find here *the mountain* of solitary prayer.

[2] Steinmeyer's admonitions to obey Christ, when He enjoins flight, *i.e.*, an entirely inward *retirement* and *withdrawal* from outward exertions, which can no longer avail, retain their spiritual truth for the entire period of the approaching end, although they have not exhausted the most special sense of the word.

Hosted by Google

the hindrances of nature, the other of hindrances from the environment of human ordinances and customs. It has been quite needlessly asked whether our Lord, contrary to what He elsewhere declares regarding exceptions arising from necessity, here means that flight on the Sabbath day was a thing *not permitted* even to His people; He has *nothing of this* in His thoughts. He may perhaps in the slightest degree have referred to the foreseen legal scruples which would cling to the minds of the Jewish Christians: not, however, that He would confirm *these;* at the utmost it is indicated that He presupposes even to the last an abiding friendly relation between His Church and the Jewish ordinance.[1] All this, however, is not the principal idea, which is meant only to designate various possible forms of hindrances to flight; as the unseasonable weather, so also the time of the Sabbath, in so far as journeying and fleeing would then be rendered difficult, at all events from without by others. He speaks assuredly, not without design, even to this last moment in a thoroughly *Israelitish* manner; but He means much more by these concrete descriptions, as before in vers. 17, 18, according to the spiritual import of the figurative discourse. So that it would not be against His meaning, but rather entirely corresponding to the strong *Woe*, were we to understand His words thus: Woe to such as are pregnant with plans and undertakings, when the time shall make it necessary, stript and empty of everything, to seek only preservation from the imminent judgment![2]

Vers. 21, 22. Christ has further Daniel's prophecy in His thoughts; what was there (chap. xii. 1) evidently said of the great tribulation which is now as yet future, He here applies, with *typical* truth, already to the tribulation of Jerusalem at its destruction. (Mark, ver. 19, intensifies the expression, so that

[1] Thus it is not at all necessary to suppose, with the above-named Rud. Hofmann, that "μηδὲ σαββάτῳ is again added by St Matthew *de sua mente*, perhaps *ex eventu*, but in contradiction to the spiritual and liberal view of the Sabbath elsewhere expressed by Christ!"

[2] With Steinmeyer less exactly: "Woe to the life that is in process of formation, to the life that is yet weak." For the Woe applies not to embryos and sucklings. Otherwise his interpretation of the *garments* as vessels, outward forms, for which one is now no longer to care, as if the garments made the people, is deserving of consideration at least.

Hosted by Google

we may perceive besides that it is not yet to be taken literally in the first fulfilment.) Josephus, indeed, as an eye-witness, expresses himself almost in the same words when he describes the greatness of that calamity; yet that other coming will alone give to these words their entire meaning. Luke vers. 22, 23 has instead of this, These are the ἡμέραι ἐκδικήσεως (2 Macc. vi. 15); days in which is to be fulfilled *all* that is written,—not merely in Daniel, but in all prophecy,—of judgment and anger upon this people, from the curses of Moses onwards to the חֵרֶם with which Malachi ends:—therefore the great affliction upon this *land*, and the (great, complete) *wrath* upon this *people!* 1 Macc. i. 64; 1 Thes. ii. 16. So Titus is represented to have said that God was so angry with this people, that he also was afraid of His anger if he should show any mercy to them; and after the calamitous siege he refused to take the honour of it, saying that he had only lent the hands for this to the God who would show His anger against the Jews! Had not a limit been fixed by grace in the midst of wrath to the fearful calamity, no man would have escaped alive from it (for that is what is meant first of all by the words, *no flesh should be saved*—comp. Jer. xii. 12, the expression אֵין שָׁלוֹם לְכָל־בָּשָׂר); the elect also, *i.e.*, here chiefly those who were the believing ἐκλογή out of Israel, without being able to hold out and then to flee, would perish. But for the sake of those elect, whose gathering together and redemption remains the final aim of all judgments (a glance forward to ver. 31), who were also now to be saved in the type, these days of terror shall be *shortened;* or, as St Mark has it, The Lord *has already shortened them*, in His eternal wise decree, beyond which nothing can happen either great or small. Comp. Gen. xix. 22. This κολοβοῦσθαι is again taken from Daniel, who, in chap. ix. 25, 27, uses חרץ (comp. Job xiv. 5; Is. x. 23), and at ver. 24, חתך in the same sense: the destruction is fixedly determined, exactly measured out, and *cut off*, so that it cannot last a shorter or a *longer* time. Many explain this of the sudden interruption of the siege by Cestius Gallus, so that many might flee; although this *interruption* does not quite correspond to the shortening here meant. In the future fulfilment, however, the gracious cutting short of the time of tribulation, the hastening

Hosted by Google

on of the end brought about by God's hand and decree, on behalf of the elect who are to be saved, will probably be much more strikingly manifest.[1]

Vers. 23–26. In this τότε Dorner (although not precisely as Ebrard understands it) finds a certain *transition* from the type to the second fulfilment, as if it meant "then also, *afterwards*." Here then is what, at a later place, he so strongly contends against, a sort of prophetically shortening εὐθέως! (Comp. S. 21.) He views the whole of vers. 23–28 only as *appendicem admonitionis loco positam*, so that ver. 29 is connected with ver. 22. *But* by this is overlooked the entire close connection of this *continuous* discourse, as already indicated above, which does not now speak at once of another τότε, but of the same danger for the elect of being involved in the common ruin. In the previous verses, however, prominence is given to the *distress;* while now it is to the danger of being *seduced* by false offers of help out of that distress. *Both* are meant, as well in the first as in the second fulfilment; only that Christ again, as at the beginning, turns the view more strongly from the type to the antitype. Therefore His warning with the utmost propriety applies to us, in reference to powerful errors that are impending. The fundamental idea is: Beware of trusting to the pseudo-Christs or pseudo-prophets when they would entice you away from *waiting* patiently for the true Christ and His real coming, when they tell you to wait *here or there;* for it is not in such a manner that your Lord will reveal Himself. What Jewish fanatics and Christian seducers did in this way, at that time, with their promised but hardly accomplished signs and wonders, was indeed a faint type of those things of which 2 Thess. ii. 9–12 prophesies, and which Christ with His strong words has here chiefly in mind. At the same time, however, we are not to suppose that only the last days are suddenly to bring such things, hitherto unheard of; for they go on in a gradually progressive development, and the warning of Christ has even now its most serious truth. The signs and wonders

[1] Zeller speaks profoundly (Beugg. Blatt. 1837, Nr. 6) upon the means of this hastening prepared in the entire development of history, according to which the carcase must ever more rapidly grow putrid for the eagles.

Hosted by Google

(respecting which we learn here, as Israel did already in Deut. xiii. 1–3, that in themselves they do not prove the truth) will appear at last in the most literal reality, but rather in their spiritual form; although accounts of deceiving, tempting wonder-workings in external nature are also not altogether wanting. The intervening εἰ δυνατόν teaches us, indeed, that the elect who are foreseen by God *cannot* be led away. This impossibility, however, lies not in themselves, so as that they might falsely boast of this, before it is revealed whether or not they are of the number of the elect (see 2 Pet. i. 10, iii. 17)—but only in the gracious decree of God who keeps those who are faithful to Him.

Oh that we took faithful heed to all that the Lord has so faithfully *said to us beforehand!* "It would have been better that, in the times of peace, ye had let yourselves be instructed as Christians respecting the end of the world, than in the times of trouble to be *terrified* thereby like the world;"[1] or—we add—to let yourselves be deceived by false, fanatical *consolations;* for Christ means rather a being seduced into false tranquillity, than a being terrified. His warning prediction embraces the entire period of waiting for the appearing and setting up of His kingdom; and is, in the general sense, to be understood in the light of the earlier discourse, Luke xvii. 20–23. *Behold here or there* —this can never be said of the kingdom of Christ, which (rightly understood!) actually remains an "invisible church" until one day the manifestation and revelation of what is now concealed shall appear undeniably to all. The expressions "in the *desert* or in the *chambers*"—are intended to specify the *here or there* under two aspects. They are selected with reference, in part, to the circumstances of the judgment upon Jerusalem; when ψευδόχριστοι raised tumults and led out their followers openly into the desert, as Acts xxi. 38, and many instances in Josephus, while the ψευδοπροφῆται called to secret consultation or waiting in their chambers. Then, however, they form in general a variously significant antithesis of possible seduction. The one points us *widely* to the great desolate church, the other *narrowly* to manifold sects and schisms; hence the latter, as

[1] Nitzsch, Wittenberger Predigten von 1819, p. 46.

Hosted by Google

opposed to the former, stands in the Plural.[1] The invisible presence of Christ is indeed here as well as there; yet not exclusively here or there, so as that those who wait for Him should confine themselves to any particular place. The deceiving voices would "limit Christianity to this and that system and practice"—"would allure now to strictness, again to laxity, now to separation, again to union"—offer us at one time open power and authority, and, at another, secret, false spirituality—and in whatever other ways it might be interpreted. Always there are two main by-paths, in the perplexed times of the church waiting for its Lord, which in reality correspond to Sadduceeism and Pharisaism. The *frivolous* seeking of Christ there in the desert seems good and wide-hearted; but there is in it the leaven of unbelief in the spiritual inner reality of His kingdom. The *fanatical* seeking of Christ here in the chambers seems earnest and zealous; but there is in it the leaven of hypocrisy, of impure separatism arising from individual caprice. In truth Christ *is* already in every place where souls, in full humility, and patience of faith in *His* words alone, wait for His appearing; but this *visible manifestation* of His kingdom will not have come so long as any one can doubt or deny, so long as a dispute can arise between a here *or* there.

Vers. 27, 28. Does not our Lord *now* at last speak of His yet future advent? it might be asked, seeing that the preceding word, with its deep significance, already extends to the later time. To this we answer that He certainly speaks of this; as in the entire prophecy everything points to the end, and therein alone finds its last truth. But, as surely as the expressions of ver. 26 were not yet completely loosed from the type, so surely

[1] We do not retract this, in spite of Lange's contradiction (ii. 3, p. 1271); and still think that the antithesis of public and private, general and particular, is far more definitely indicated here than the strangely inverting interpretation, according to which the desert would speak of the renunciation of the world, the store-room of the enjoyment of earthly goods. Those who find a reference in ἔρημος to the "Eremites" forget that in *biblical* usage ἔρημος and מִדְבָּר mean only the uncultivated expanse; and so ταμεῖον, with the idea of privacy (Matt. vi. 6; Luke xii. 3), points back only to the Heb. חֶדֶר, which frequently occurs in this sense. The latter, at the same time, applies by way of refutation to the fault found by Sepp with the Lutheran translation.

Hosted by Google

does He speak here also *in the first place* still of the *coming of the Son of Man* denoted in chaps. x. 23, xvi. 28, for the first preliminary manifestation of His kingdom, the salvation of His people, the punishment of His enemies; as demonstrated when all the Jewish and Gentile world saw His hand and power, and the certain truth of His word, in the judgment upon Jerusalem. *Like the lightning*, which shoots under the whole heaven (Job xxxvii. 3)—this means, first of all only in antithesis to what goes before, So suddenly, so *manifestly* and *indubitably*, that no saying and crying here or there is any longer necessary.[1] If at that time the whole world did *not* see or recognise *Christ* in this gleaming lightning-flash of wrath upon Israel, and the gracious light upon His Church, we mark in that the imperfection of the type; for the rest, however, it is clear that not till ver. 30 is the visible *coming* of the Son of Man spoken of with yet more definite expression. Therefore the παρουσία which shows itself *only* in the manner of lightning is still distinguished from the *personal* coming. But here we must be on our guard against all ingeniously idealistic generalising of the idea; as, for example, Lange (after having called [Leben Jesu i. 38] even the first appearing of the Lord, "a great lightning-flash upon the world") speaks of "the illuminating lightning, the world-purifying storm of the *spirit of John*, in its power of light and fire" (p. 267)—and the like. Such notions only lead away from the proper interpretation of the text, which here plainly means a convincing, undeniable, *suddenly* appearing *fact*. And one, indeed, in which (as must ever be repeated) there is a twofold correspondence between the first and the second fulfilment. Dorner's view, that ver. 27 can *only* denote the παρουσία κατ' ἐξοχήν, the *extremum judicium* (pp. 17–27), is without foundation; our Lord, in other places, spoke of the destruction of Jerusalem under the name of His coming, Matt. xvi. 28, x. 23. In the earlier preparatory discourse Luke xvii., in which naturally the two events are as yet interwoven with each other throughout, the disciples (because He had repelled the Pharisees with their *when*) inquired at least concerning the *where;* and Christ gave them for answer the same saying with which He

[1] Here the exegesis of the Irvingites says truly: "The lightning comes out of the dark cloud, and before it goes the storm, not the morning twilight."

Hosted by Google

now, in St Matthew, closes the prophecy respecting Jerusalem in particular. Although Dorner, with perfect justice, says that the meaning here is, *non in civitate et urbe hac vel illa (e.g.* Hierosolymis, Pepuzæ) *apparebo, sed quousque extensa est mundi generis humani putredo*—yet this by no means excludes the fact that the idea *takes its start* from *Israel.*

There can, in general, be no doubt[1] that what is here spoken of under the figure of the eagles gathered around the carcass, is the *judicial punishment* which connects itself with the advent of Christ (and which, even in the first coming, is what chiefly makes it visible). For our Lord uses this particular figure not as a proverb in general, but as a biblical and still more as a prophetical proverb; and He therefore gives thereby again a *sign* arising from the coincidence with earlier prophecies. The נֶשֶׁר of the Bible, as also the Greek ἀετός, includes also the *vulture,* to which we do not now give the name of *eagle,* which, however, as is well known, even Pliny classes with eagles; hence first of all in Job the original proverb, As an eagle flies to the prey (chap. ix. 26)—*where a carcass is there is he,* by a wondrous instinct he can scent and descry it from afar (chap. xxxix. 30). When Moses (Deut. xxviii.), with remote indefiniteness, portrays the variously fulfilled future punitive judgment upon Israel, and speaks of the *nation* which the Lord will send upon them from far (first of all the Medes and Chaldeans, comp. ver. 48 with Jer. xxviii. 13; ver. 50 with Lam. v. 12; Is. xlvii. 6, xxxiii. 19; but afterwards, also the Romans, comp. ver. 52 with Luke xix. 43), he first makes use of the figure of the eagle hasting to his prey (ver. 49). Then Hosea chap. viii. 1 alludes to the same figure; and afterwards Habakkuk thus designates chiefly the Chaldeans (chap. i. 8). It follows therefore that Christ now points back to that

[1] Although many well-meaning commentators (following the ancients, Theophylact, Euthymius) even to this day hold fast what continued for an unaccountably long period to be the orthodox interpretation, and which even Luther thus expresses: "*As the saying runs,* Where a carcass is, etc., as the eagles gather together wherever the carcass is—so shall My people gather themselves to Me! Where I am, there shall my elect also be!" The Irvingite tract already mentioned, Das prophetische Wort, lays emphasis on this, that eagles consumed only animals *newly* dead, therefore the carcass here signifies the Saviour who died for us, yet saw no corruption; and this passage denotes "the withdrawal of the Church to Christ."

Hosted by Google

first judgment upon Jerusalem; because all these form one connected series of types which reflect each other, the earlier of which always at the same time prophesies of the later, even to the last. He will thereby say that *God's fundamental principle in all judgments* remains the same, in so far as a corruption that has grown to maturity draws down punishment, not merely according to perfect justice, but also by a necessity inherent in the thing itself; quite *naturally*, so to speak, just as the eagles are made for and find out the carcass.[1] That which is dead grows putrid; and what is putrid is consumed and cleared away to make pure air, by those agents which are made and appointed to that end by God. The putrid-state carcass, and the dead, corrupting national condition of Israel, was, at that time, the carcass around which the eagles could not but be gathered; even so will it be one day with Christendom, when Christ comes the second time. The putrefaction and corruption of the dead forms a fearfully appropriate figure (chap. xxiii. 27) for all self-dissolution on the part of sinful nations and multitudes of people prepared for the judgment. Only we must not explain this first of all of the Roman *eagles;* this was only added as one of those providential ironies of so-called chance, such as are often presented in the history of the world when viewed in the light of the prophetical word. The angels of judgment (ver. 31, chap. xiii. 41) will one day completely execute the consuming, removing Woe upon the great πτῶμα; and there may be a hint of this when, in Rev. viii. 13, the angel who denounces the Woe is also called a flying eagle. In this respect, as Hofmann[2] perceives, it is not at all so much amiss (as regards the final sense) to explain the ἀετοί of angels.

If, after all that has been said, we did not yet understand what an advance over a wide intervening space is indicated by the *prophetic* εὐθέως that follows in Matt. ver. 29, *Luke* ver. 24 comes to our aid, with a clearly decisive word evidently belong-

[1] What V. Gerlach remarks is very striking, that, to a certain extent, everything in this prophecy arranges itself around ver. 28 as a main and fundamental proposition—judgment upon what is ripe for judgment; therefore the destruction also of the *outward* false kingdom of God is in the course of nature the necessary end.

[2] Weiss. und Erfüll. ii. 278.

Hosted by Google

ing to *this place*. The *wrath upon this people* will not entirely consume and exterminate them from the earth (Deut. vi. 15, ix. 25; Amos ix. 8, 9); but they shall partly fall by the sharpness (or devouring mouth) of the sword, partly be led captive *among all nations*, according to the prophecy which has been in course of accomplishment since Deut. xxviii. 64, which was by no means fulfilled in the first exile, but is manifestly so now even to this day. Their *captivity* by the hand and counsel of God mocks all emancipation, just as the continued existence of the oppressed and homeless people among the nations defied all the cunning and power of Egypt to effect their extinction. And *Jerusalem?* Destroyed and laid waste, indeed, as it never was before, there will not remain a Jerusalem, but—a sanctuary *trodden under foot*, a (former and future) city of God given over to the Gentiles. Ἔσται πατουμένη expresses more than πατηθήσεται. It is again a prophetical word; for, in this prophecy of Christ all former threads run together, to show us the foreknown unity of the prophesying Spirit. *Being trodden down* indicates in general a being oppressed, ignominiously treated, brought under subjection by the power of the enemy (for example, Jud. x. 8, at the beginning of the judicial punishment upon Israel); and Daniel afterwards prophesies of the sanctuary being trodden under foot, chap. viii. 10, 13, as 1 Macc. iii. 45, 51, iv. 60 the first fulfilment follows, as Is. lxiii. 18, lxiv. 10, 11, had already spoken of it (not without *recompensing* reference to chap. i. 12). Comp. still Rev. xi. 2.[1] The hand of the Lord rests wonderfully upon this city, and its entire typical history: the Zion and Jerusalem of God, because its inhabitants have become Amorites in the complete measure of sin, because they themselves have polluted and trodden down the sanctuary, must, through the abiding abomination of desolation, itself become a יְבוּס (locus conculcatus), ere the original *Salem* of Melchisedec returns. For the state of being trodden down lasts a long time, but not always. Julian, indeed, will, in vain attempt to build, and the Crusades will in vain again sanctify it; but the Lord has appointed the

[1] All these passages abundantly refute that trivial rendering by Bolten, "Jerusalem will be *inhabited* by the Gentiles;" that is, will be trodden, for which signification of πατεῖν Wahl's Clavis, which interprets it in the same way, adduces other passages of the LXX. and Greek writers.

Hosted by Google

end, "*Until* the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled." Luther understood this, "Until the Gentiles are converted to the faith, that is until the end of the world"—but we now understand the prophetical theology better. The *times* of the Gentiles can only be the *times of calling*[1] appointed, for them as for Israel, by the grace and long-suffering of God; and they are fulfilled or expire, —*i.e.* (in the correlate expression which belongs thereto), the *time* of the *end*, the day of judgment is come,—when the Gentiles also are ripe for a like *judgment* to that of Israel. Only this is meant everywhere by the prophetical expressions; see Is. xiii. 22; Jer. xxvii. 7; Ezek. xxi. 25, xxii. 3, and in particular Ezek. xxx. 3, an allusion to which passage our Lord has doubtless here in His mind. The *Gentiles*, however, are not merely "the Romans, on whom the Germans fulfilled the judicial punishment" (Braune), but all non-theocratical nations through the whole course of history, chiefly the Christendom proceeding from them. In this entire, long period is accomplished the gathering together of the faithful out of all nations, the coming in of the πλήρωμα:—but then the treading down of Jerusalem ceases, and it is built again; then will Israel be restored out of all nations, all as the Prophets have prophesied; and Christ here points to this in the ἄχρι which confirms all. Compare, finally, the very strikingly harmonious passage of the apocryphal book Tobias, where at chap. xiv. 4, 5, it was already said, according to genuinely prophetical intuition: Ἱεροσόλυμα ἔσται ἔρημος, καὶ ὁ οἶκος τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν αὐτῇ κατακαήσεται καὶ ἔρημος ἔσται μέχρι χρόνου. Καὶ πάλιν ἐλεήσει αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς, καὶ ἐπιστρέψει αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν γῆν, καὶ οἰκοδομήσουσι τὸν οἶκον, οὐχ οἷος ὁ πρότερος, ἕως πληρωθῶσι καιροὶ τοῦ αἰῶνος—this latter here in quite another sense.

[1] Therefore, something else than (according to Lange) the time when they shall exist as *political powers* and rule over Jerusalem.

Hosted by Google

THE MIDDLE ADVENT: APPEARING OF THE KINGDOM: GATHERING TOGETHER OF THE ELECT.

Matt. xxiv. 29–44; Mark xiii. 24–33; Luke xxi. 25–36.

We have, in our interpretation hitherto, studied as much as possible to abide by the literally clear sense, applied to the nearest fulfilment, that which already lies historically before us. We could not and would not deny, that all that has been said by our Lord at the same time reaches much farther; but, in order not to offend the majority of our readers, who could hardly tolerate such things, we refrained from disclosing the typical reflections lying behind the prophetical word, and from bringing into notice those hints, whether in great things or in small, which are interspersed here and there for the searching eye. (As for example, that the lightning of the advent of the Son of Man shines *from east* to west and not *vice versâ*.) Now, however, when Christ begins to prophesy exclusively and properly of the future, which is as yet concealed from us, *interpretation*, in the strict sense of the word, ceases. He who has forgotten and lost sight of the fact (as, alas, many critics at the present day), that, according to the clear expressions of Christ elsewhere, the catastrophe of Jerusalem and Israel was itself a coming of the Son of Man, could of course not agree with what has been said hitherto from this point of view; he who forgets, further, that all prophecy, according to its nature, must, with all clearness on the whole, retain, before its fulfilment, a certain measure of obscurity in the particulars;—he who will handle a prophetical text just as he would other historical and didactic texts, will from this point onwards be still less able to reconcile himself to the word of Christ, and our attempts to interpret it. It is impossible, however, for us to pay continued attention to such folly, because that would everywhere be an obstruction in the way of our saying anything to those who understand.

An old and, in this form at least, obsolete exegesis (such as is represented, for example, by the English Newton, in his other-

Hosted by Google

wise valuable work upon the prophecies), understood Matt. xxiv. 29–44, solely of the destruction of Jerusalem; but such an interpretation could be based only on a lamentable torturing of the words, the possibility of which indeed lies in this, that this second section of the discourse contains typical *glances backwards* to that first, just as the former was spoken in purely typical *prospective views*. But that with ver. 29 a *section* actually begins, in which the word now quite plainly brings near *another* coming of the Son of Man, ought to be an unconditionally settled point with every commentator who reverently takes the three Evangelists together; and it is determined already by the καιροὶ ἐθνῶν in Luke, here put between with a far-reaching ἄχρι. *Consequently* the εὐθέως in Matt., on which the critics still always stumble, ought not to lead us astray, but must be understood in accordance with the prophetical manner of viewing events together. Every other letter of the passage points clearly enough to the true sense of the Spirit in this one little word. *Those days:* these are the same of which vers. 19 and 22 spoke; therefore also the expression "*after* the tribulation of those days," is here an evident assurance, that what is *now* to happen will follow after the *shortening* of this tribulation; *i.e.*, further, as after the τότε, ver. 23, so after the "coming of the Son of Man" which is meant at vers. 27, 28, namely, when this prepares the way for itself *the second time* by similar terrors, and then displays itself indubitably now for the first time properly in a visible form. One has only to read Mark, ver. 24, with Bengel rightly, without the comma after ἡμέραις, in order to find everything in perfect harmony: *Post* tribulationem *illam* erunt *dies illi*, ergo alio spectat *illam*, alio *illis*. *Illam* respicit totum sermonem præcedentem, sed *illis* ad novissima prospicit, uti, ver. 32. When our Lord, in the certainly remarkable εὐθέως, hastens over the great μετά through all the καιροὺς ἐθνῶν, this is neither an ordinarily historical "immediately," as the English Bible renders it, nor a פִּתְאֹם (already indeed falsely rendered in the Greek text), nor "suddenly, unexpectedly"[1] (see vers. 42–44), meant merely of the *final* end. What then? First of all, the key

[1] For which Lange also again decides! Comp. Dorner's Note, p. 3, which mentions by name the principal commentators of this class.

Hosted by Google

lies already in the declaration of Christ respecting His own ignorance of the time (ver. 36, Mark ver. 32), according to which He Himself, seeing events in close proximity, overlooked the wide intervening space.[1] Then, however, according to the spirit of all prophecy, this εὐθέως has a perfectly correct; truth it indicates that the fulfilment *hastens* to the end in a strictly defined and ceaseless development (Hab. ii. 3), and that chiefly its latter stages will transpire abruptly and suddenly. If this εὐθέως cannot be so understood (we ask in opposition to Dorner) —what, then, is meant by the apocalyptic ἐν τάχει and ταχύ? (Rev. i. 1, xxii. 6, 7.) We hold it undisturbed with honest Roos, who here observes: "In truth the waiting of Jesus until all His enemies become His footstool is no *tedious* waiting! His glorious coming is *to Him* so near, that He represents Himself as one who is *soon* to come." This is what is *true* and justifiable in the *fraus optica*, at which Dorner is so horrified, which already in the lowliness of His human vision made the long time appear shortened.[2]

All that Christ has further to say respecting His *middle* coming, in order to the manifest *appearing of the kingdom* for His elect then gathered together (as this was spoken of above), includes both the *prophecy itself* that speaks of it, and also the three warning parables on to chap. xxv. 30. The prophecy itself mentions first *what* will happen, and then gives a declaration respecting the *when*. Here, also, are analogous signs (as in vers. 6–8), only now presented in shorter compass, in a more condensed form (ver. 29); then *the* directly announcing sign, and the *coming* of the Son of Man Himself:—His coming

[1] *Not merely*, as Bengel thinks, "Of that which is to happen after that calamity of the destruction of Jerusalem, the most immediate thing which it is proper for me now to announce and for you to expect is, that the sun, etc." But Christ actually *speaks* bona fide just as He Himself *sees*.

[2] It is finally not to be overlooked, that every generation is to wait for Christ; and probably for those who die in this attitude of expectation the space of time to the fulfilment is one that quickly passes over. Roos: "The Apostles, also, were to represent this as something near; for the greatest part of their *waiting* was to be passed in heaven, where there is no being weary." Let the commentator, with true thoughts of death, transpose himself into that frame and that point of view which reduces to small compass the little bit of history upon earth before the last day.

Hosted by Google

visibly before all the tribes of the earth to *judgment*, ver. 30, as also for the *saving* gathering together of His people, ver. 31. (Both corresponding to vers. 27, 28.) If the first question of the disciples, *When* will this come to pass? still remained for the final answer, Christ at last replies to it here in a twofold manner; at the same time, carrying back the end to the beginning, but *no longer* speaking expressly of the destruction of Jerusalem. There is first of all a *general asseveration* that all shall certainly come to pass at its proper time: all the signs as surely as the fig-tree again puts forth shoots. Israel is indeed destroyed, but still remains spared vers. 32–34 (for the future conversion, chap. xxiii. 39)—nay, the complete fulfilment of every word even to the last is here certified, as surely as heaven and earth pass away! ver. 35. (On the sense of these asseverations afterwards more particularly.) Hereupon follows at last the definite conclusive declaration respecting the *time*, *day*, and *hour*, according to human calendar-reckoning. *No one* knows it, ver. 36—the coming of the Son of Man will at all events happen unexpectedly; as for the race of men who are to be judged, like Noah's times, vers. 37–39; so, with its separation between the judged and saved vers. 40, 41, for *His people* also, who are therefore directed to *wait* and *watch* from one generation to another: vers. 42–44. (Watch, for ye *know* not time and hour! ver. 43. *Remember ye* what others forget! ver. 43. Thus *be ready*, ver. 44.) Which conclusion already in the parabolic form then leads over to the following parables.

Ver. 29. The interpretation, recently brought forward by Dorner with great confidence and much acuteness, according to which vers. 29, 30 is not at all to be understood of the *rebus extremis* (which, indeed, his mistaken *nexus* forbids to him), but of the destruction and overthrow of the heathen world, gradually going on through the entire period of history—is the strangest and most forced thing in the whole of his learned monograph. *Paganorum* imperiorum gloria splendorque interibit, orbis terrarum evadit Christianus et novum aevum incipiet. The powers of the world are no longer worshipped; Christ sitting in the heavens reveals Himself to the world. Jam adest secundum stadium (*οἱ καιροὶ τῶν ἐθνῶν*) continens *Ethni-*

Hosted by Google

cismi occasum! This is without example in the whole ancient Scripture, the language of which alone Christ, as Prophet in Israel, can speak; we find rather in the prophets the whole of the figures here used, always applied only to judgments as *types* of the *end of the world.* (The assertion directed against this, p. 54, 55, is completely erroneous.) We shall not, therefore, in this our second edition deviate from our interpretation hitherto.

The darkening of the light or the lights is, first of all, a general metaphor for the extinction of happiness, the coming in of tribulation and anguish; so, for example, Jer. xv. 9, and, in the microcosm for the individual, the day of death, which is his last day. (Eccles. xii. 2.) Then, in particular, the obscuration of the lights of heaven, the sun, moon, and stars, is a figure variously recurring in the prophets, expressive of great *tribulations* and *judgments* upon nations and men on the earth, as Is. v. 30, xiii. 10, xxxiv. 4; Jer. iv. 28; Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8; Amos viii. 9; Mic. iii. 6. The word of Christ here certainly includes also this *figurative* sense; and teaches us to expect again, before His second coming, great θλίψεις and ἀνάγκας. Here it is chiefly the heaven of the Church that is spoken of: the sun of revealed religion; the moon of intellectual culture and science, upon which the sun casts its rays (while in other respects sun and moon neither shine nor are darkened together); the stars of the heads of churches and ecclesiastical teachers (see already Dan. viii. 10, 11, and then Rev. i. 20, xii. 1)—all these will be darkened in the great falling away, which takes places ever more and more at different periods.[1] For this sense it is not said that the stars fall *to the earth;* but (as Mark has it) only an ἐκπίπτειν, a falling out or extinction of these in the heaven. But the word then reaches further: although the literal fulfilment actually comes only as a corresponding testimony to the figurative fulfilment that precedes it, seeing that what is outward and material is in general what is unsubstantial in God's world, although the

[1] It remains a question whether the ruling powers in a *political* respect (in so far as they are connected with the outward Church in Christian and Christianly governed nations) are here also meant.. Compare again an Irvingite essay by John Hooper, entitled: "Translation; or, Changing of the living saints."

Hosted by Google

darkening in the heaven of humanity is the proper reality, of which that in the *physical* heaven is rather only the figure—yet for this very reason, *must* this *physical* realisation of the multiplying signs (Joel iii. 4) quite as certainly follow, even to the last letter of the prediction. The shaking of the heavens with the earth (Hagg. ii. 6, 21)[1] fulfils itself not merely before in great commotions of the world (there vers. 7, 22), but *at last actually* just as it is interpreted in Heb. xii. 26, 27; see Rev. vi. 12–15 with reference to Is. xxxiv. 4, l. 3.[2] At all events, in no sense are we to understand it of occurrences "in the heavenly regions," which remain invisible to men upon earth; but of truly visible things within the horizon of human vision. The δυνάμεις τῶν οὐρανῶν are also not the stars, which were already named (צְבָא הַשָּׁמַיִם, comp. Ps. xxxiii. 6; Is. xxxiv. 4, LXX.); still less the angels, who are then to be "in great commotion," for they immediately follow in their own proper name;[3] but, as the *Vulg.* puts it in this instance correctly, *virtutes coelorum*, the sustaining and working powers of the heavenly edifice (with their influences upon the earth). Our Lord will say, finally summing up, All things shall be shaken, and at last dissolved, so that not even "one stone shall remain upon another," 2 Pet. iii. 10–12. Still He now only touches preparatorily on this actual passing away of the heavens with the earth, which is reserved for the *third* coming (ver. 35); inasmuch as (not indeed without reference to Haggai) He merely signifies a forewarning σαλευθῆναι, and only announces this as preparing the way for the next

[1] Where also just as here in the *prophetical* period there is a "yet a little."

[2] I shall therefore certainly not deny this real destruction of the present world, which the entire Scripture certifies, nor interpret the words of Jesus here *merely* figuratively of the preceding commotions of the world and Church. When, however, Kurtz (Bibel u. Astronomie p. 126) maintains against me that the application of that prophetical usage, otherwise acknowledged, is inadmissible here, because the same thing is said previously in dry and naked words—he greatly mistakes the prophetical manner, which often says the same thing in different sections, now figuratively and now properly. In this chapter, indeed, vers. 4–14, had partly a generally introductory, anticipative character, partly again, vers. 29, 30 speak purposely in expressions respecting the end as at last literally so coming.

[3] Also not the *mountains* that bear the heavens, its pillars, as Sepp has fancifully explained it!

Hosted by Google

τότε, ver. 30 (here the οὐρανός and its νεφελαί are still in existence).

See now how in harmony with this Luke vers. 25, 26, first of all mentions like σημεῖα in sun, moon, and stars; then, however, he adds, what Christ certainly also said, how it will be ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς. A fearing and trembling of nations on account of such signs, a fainting away of men from *fear* of an evil conscience, which by these signs speaks to them of judgment, and from expectation of the things that are to come upon the world—for they will not expect Him, the coming One; therefore as a punishment the wilfully blind fear of an indefinite something, as we often already plainly see it in the unbelieving race of our own days. The raging sea and its σάλος, in like manner, in a twofold sense: figuratively of the disturbances of nations, as the πόλεμοι and σεισμοί Matt. vers. 6, 7 (for see Ps. xlvi. 4, lxv. 8, lxxxix. 10, 11, xciii. 3; Is. xvii. 12, 13; Rev. xvii. 15), but also *literally* as the accompanying testimony.

Ver. 30. *This* is a *different* τότε from all the preceding, with an open prophecy brought much nearer; an actually personal ἔρχεσθαι of the Son of Man, still more properly visible than the lightning-like παρουσία, ver. 27. For the whole scene draws gradually nearer and nearer to one end after the other. Here already, at the beginning of the section, is a stronger expression than at the end of the first, ὄψονται and φανήσεται; for, after all the signs mentioned at ver. 29, there goes immediately before the proper coming still a *sign of the Son of Man in heaven*,—now mysterious in the prophecy, but quite manifest in the fulfilment,—which is most emphatically announced by the Article. Here, therefore, is the final answer to the question, ver. 3 (*What the sign of Thy coming?*). Already on account of the reference to the question of the disciples, but also according to the clear word itself, we cannot possibly understand by this sign the υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου Himself, in His visible appearance;[1] for the seeing of Him who comes is distinguished

[1] Storr, to whose forced exegesis one is accustomed, says, "The Son of Man Himself is *this wonder!*" So unhappily Bengel also: Ipse erit signum sui—for which he compares Luke ii. 12, where, however, it is not the child that is the σημεῖον, but the cradle and swaddling clothes. Recently Hofmann (Weiss. und Erfüll. ii. 185) very decidedly: "He

Hosted by Google

and separated from the appearing of His sign, by the lamentations that come between. Therefore it is not a special token connected with His visible appearance, to prove the identity of the glorious Lord with Him who was once crucified, such as the wounds in His side (Rev. i. 7; Zech. xii. 10). But certainly some sign of His approach plainly manifesting itself to all the world, analogous to those foregoing signs in the heaven; and still at last ἐν οὐρανῷ, of which we are warranted only in saying with V. Meyer, "it remains uncertain until the fulfilment."[1] The nearest analogy is certainly to the star of the magicians; only that then the significance of it will be indubitably evident to all. All φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς shall beat the breast, and utter lamentations;[2] *i.e.*, not merely the tribes of the land of Judah (although Zech. xii. 10–14 has a typical connection therewith), but the ἔθνη and ἄνθρωποι ἐν τῇ οἰκουμένῃ, as is plainly to be read in St Luke: comp. Rev. i. 7, πᾶς ὀφθαλμός, and the φυλαί there as at Rev. v. 9, xi. 9, xiv. 6 in the sense of כָּל־מִשְׁפְּחוֹת הָאֲדָמָה, also Rev. vi. 15–17. First, there is the cry of lamentation, *He cometh!* before they *see* Him. Then, however, He cometh *in the clouds of heaven;* which here, as in chap. xxvi. 64, and also in St Mark, is the *intermediate* expression between μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν Rev. i. 7 (at the same time His continual coming

himself, his own self-representation"—with reference to Bengel. Similarly at least Victor Andreä (Lebensfragen der Kirche Christi p. 99): "The sign of all signs, the sign of the Prophet Jonas in its last potency, the splendour of the resurrection-body." But the text *distinguishes* by a second τότε the coming itself!

[1] It is interesting to notice the different opinions that have been expressed on this point from the earliest times to the present day. The ancients (from Chrysostom and Theophylact downwards, also for example Beda, Thomas Aquin.): *a cross in the heavens.* Others: *the clouds in which He comes.* Also: *a comet*, such as it appeared according to Josephus bell. jud. vii. 30. Hunnius: *the star of the magicians.* Grotius: *the spread of the Gospel* (to which Dorner inclines)! Others: *the sound, signal-call of a trumpet!!* The Irvingites now understand it to be *the first resurrection!* Finally, Rud. Hofmann: *the appearance of a Son of Man at that time in the Holy of Holies* recorded in the Hebrew text of Josephus—because the Gospel which was published after the destruction of Jerusalem has introduced this.

[2] Where the play upon the word noticed by Lange: κόψονται, ὄψονται, can have been only accidental.

Hosted by Google

in the cloud-veil of judgments, which already run through the whole history of the world) and ἐν νεφέλῃ in St Luke, which designates still more clearly the advent-cloud (the white horse, Rev. xix. 11) as corresponding to that cloud of the ascension (Acts i. 9, 11).[1] Thus, in a way which we cannot now more nearly determine, will actually follow the *middle* coming of the Son of Man (of which in general Rev. xix. prophesies); although it does not yet coincide with Matt. xxv. 31 (in *His* entire and full glory!), yet by a visibly personal manifestation: μετὰ δυνάμεως καὶ δόξης πολλῆς. This δύναμις is again not to be understood of an accompanying host of angels or saints, but merely corresponds to the powers of heaven mentioned before; as a δύναμις θεοῦ irresistibly manifesting itself in His coming and judging, as the δόξα, the brightness (כָּבוֹד) that glorifies Him, now alone shines after the darkening of the heavenly bodies, as a last type of that which, in a last future, according to Is. xxiv. 23, lx. 19, 20, shall be literally fulfilled. Rev. xxi. 23. The entire description of the coming of the Son of Man in the clouds gives us finally, at the conclusion of Christ's discourses to His disciples,—as afterwards, chap. xxvi. 64, to His enemies,—the most solemn declaration as to the sense in which He has called Himself "Son of Man," viz., according to Dan. vii. 13, 14. This prophecy of Daniel indeed strictly points to this intermediate coming for the setting up of His *kingdom;* with it again connects itself the beginning of the last prophetical writing in the Scripture, Rev. i. 7, 13.

Ver. 31. All power and glory is His, all angels are *His* servants and messengers. That which later, in Heb. i. 13, 14, an Apostle again begins patiently to teach for believers and unbelievers in Israel, Christ has Himself also testified from the beginning according to the gospel of St Matthew: chaps. xi. 27, xiii. 41, xxii. 43. Only the angels (who in general know many things which no man knows, as afterwards ver. 36 indicates, 2 Sam. xiv.

[1] For that (as Stein thinks, who so diligently traces out the usage) this *Singular* in Luke is merely a consistency on the part of the writer, who in his two writings has never used this word in the Plural, is a jejune remark. Besides chap. xii. 54, the word occurs in "both writings" only at Luke ix. 34, 35 and Acts i. 9, where the Singular is quite as distinctively correct as here.

Hosted by Google

20) know how to separate between the good and the bad, and rightly to bring together the elect from all quarters of the earth. The *trumpet* is not merely figurative, as according to Num. x. 2 the host or congregation of Israel was thus convoked; but rather to be understood as calling to mind the law of Moses, given on that day when the Lord Himself summoned His people from Sinai with *the voice of a trumpet exceeding loud* (Ex. xix. 16, 19). This is what Christ means by the σάλπιγξ φωνῆς μεγάλης; for when He comes to judgment the law again comes into force for those who are judged, while, for the redeemed who have become His people by the obedience of faith, it is, I am the Lord thy God! The sound of trumpets is in general associated with any special solemnity in which *the King* reveals Himself and is praised (Ps. xlvii. 5). What the Spirit in the Scripture, however, further prophesies of the seven trumpets, Rev. viii. 2, and a last one of all, 1 Cor. xv. 52, belongs not to the interpretation here; it is only to be observed that in this passage Christ means already the same trumpet as St Paul, 1 Thess. iv. 16 (still distinguished from the voice of the archangel), mentions with reference to the first resurrection:—on the other hand, 1 Cor. xv. points still further beyond. For although we do not know more particularly of these things, yet the return of Israel evidently in the prophetical word closely connects itself with the intermediate coming of Christ for the millennial kingdom. Here our Lord as yet conceals this *mystery*, as also the resurrection; yet the elect gathered together are now (while at the first appearing of the kingdom after Jerusalem's judgment it happened as described at Matt. viii. 11, 12) *chiefly* the restored of Israel:—hence the expressions employed point back to Deut. xxx. 4; Is. xi. 11, 12, xliii. 5, 6; Zech. ii. 6–13 (xiv. 4, 5). Yet are the Gentiles, as the πλήρωμα brought in, joined to His saints (Ps. l. 1–5); and His whole people are the διασπορά, now brought together in power and glory. (1 Pet. i. 1; Jam. i. 1.) The ἐπισυνάγειν is seen to be something quite different from the fleeing out of Judea before! The elect tribe, as the people of *heaven* in opposition to the φυλαῖς τῆς γῆς;—therefore also are they gathered from the ends of the heavens (in which again there is a hint as yet veiled at the resurrection). The somewhat different expression in St Mark, "from the end of the earth to the end

Hosted by Google

of the heavens"—means not merely first of all what is equivalent to "from one end of the earth to the other" (Matt. ver. 27; Deut. iv. 32, xiii. 7, xxviii. 64), but, together with this, indicates that then in general heaven and earth shall wondrously come together.

Vers. 32, 33. All this however takes place not at a period arbitrarily fixed by an interfering power, but according to a regular law of development and preparation: as the eagles of judgment do not come until the carcass grows putrid, so the elect are gathered into the heavenly garner when their *ripeness* is attained. In the fig-tree learn *the* parable—namely, of these things; so it runs quite exactly in St Matthew. This, however, is the general sense of *the parable*, which we are to learn from the *fig-tree* (and *all* trees, as Luke adds): when the trees put forth shoots *the summer* is nigh (Song of Sol. ii. 12, 13); therefore is the gloriously bursting fruit and harvest season of the kingdom of God near before the door (as the Judge, Jas. v. 9), when *all these things* come to pass before the eyes of believers who perceive them, *i.e.*, when all the signs above mentioned, *together with this last one*, come. For the budding of the fig-tree is the surest sign of the season of the year. If any are satisfied with this point of comparison, viz., the certainty of the signs or indications which indeed also retains its truth, let them be so;[1] we think ourselves warranted in asking further, What then is this *fig-tree*, so significantly marked out? Even Ebrard rightly perceives that τῆς συκῆς is intended to bring to mind that fig-tree which was cursed by Christ;[2] but then he certainly inter-

[1] As the treatise already mentioned well expresses it: "Then even the most simple peasant does not need to ask the learned, whether the summer is near."

[2] On the other hand Dorner has protested against this ancient interpretation, not first to be laid to my account, with an *Ingeniosius quam verius, arbitror*. He objects that St Luke records nothing of that cursing, therefore that he cannot have thus understood the parable;—as if an Evangelist knows only *the* incidents which he records, and as if he must already understand everything in Christ's discourses which he records, exactly as *we* now do! When, further, Dorner requires the express naming of the *cursed* or *withered* fig-tree, at least an αὕτη as at ver. 34 (which yet would sound very awkward), this is contrary to the nature of such prophetical hints in the background, whose special reference conceals itself

Hosted by Google

prets wrongly thus:—When the poisonous bitter fig-leaves sprout, when the antichristian character grows and flourishes, then is the harvest time near, when the trees which have leaves *only* and no fruit, are cursed! For Christ gives here certainly a joyful sign of *summer*, pointing to the ripeness of the elect; and says nothing of "*only* leaves," or of poisonous leaves, as is proved already by the "*all* trees," which is added in St Luke. These are certainly the blessed missions for the preaching of the Gospel among all nations (see in the antitype, Rev. xxii. 2):—shall then the late fig-tree, which once *withered* under the curse, also *again* bear leaves and fruits (which in this instance go together)? Clearly enough for a simple eye does Christ show here, in this significant parable, Israel again restored to life; He points to the greater blessing that will accompany the Jewish mission as the surest sign to His people of His near approach:—as the following verse will immediately confirm to us.

First, however, we must insert here what is said in St Luke, ver. 28; because it refers not to those joyful tokens of spring, but to the terrors and anguish, vers. 25, 26. When men on the earth tremble for fear of the judgment, then shall the children of the kingdom, although partly involved in the distress, yet lift up their heads; for to them redemption comes, to them such tribulation is only "like a stormy thaw after a long winter, which announces the nearness of spring and the time of blossom" (Schmieder). The godless ones proudly stretched their neck on high, but must now bend in fear before the Lord when He ariseth to shake terribly the earth (Is. ii. 10–22); while they who have humbled themselves in due time now on the contrary lift up their heads. Here, again, is the echo of that old word, 2 Chron. xv. 7. The near coming of the Lord comforts the hearts of those who wait for Him; for the Judge is also the Saviour, and it is right in His sight to judge the one class, and to bring rest to the others, 2 Pet. ii. 9; 2 Thess. i. 5–10.

Ver. 34. We have found, hitherto, a regular progress in the discourse, ever *moving onwards* from what is typically near to what is remote and prophetically near; and now, is it to be sup-

beneath a general sense first of all. Thus "*the* fig-tree" may denote here in the first place only the species in natural history; but then comes the reminding hint in addition, for those who can perceive.

Hosted by Google

posed that all at once "everything moves back again to the immediate presence of the Apostles?" Yet we must suppose that our Lord thus moves to and fro in His discourse, if the term γενεά here can be understood as signifying only *generation*.[1] All these things of which He has spoken since ver. 29 shall *come to pass* before this generation passes; *i.e.*, not merely shall be visible in their beginnings (as Ebrard says, p. 613, not to speak of the complete confusion, p. 618). Besides, only an artificial interpretation which violates the simple flow and connection of the words can understand here an antithesis of different points of time; so that, while ver. 34 again refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, ver. 36 means the latter day of judgment, with a designed distinction. Bengel's long note which, according to a preferred reading, distinguishes between ταῦτα πάντα ver. 33, and πάντα ταῦτα, ver. 34; and interprets, "All this which has regard to Jerusalem comes to pass even in this generation; but of *that* more distant day of the second judgment knoweth no man"—is in this instance a false complication, and an unwarranted interpolation of the text. Where, then, has Christ looked back to Jerusalem since ver. 29; and what meaning would lie in the parable of the fig-tree, whose withering rather than its budding again was what came to pass in this generation? The exact understanding of this figure assists us in determining what the γενεὰ αὕτη must be; for both are in fact the same. The critics hitherto with their philological strictness have regarded it as a thing established that γενεά can signify only *generation* (which Strauss boastingly maintains), but this was not even correct philology. For Dorner, after Fritzsche had

[1] As Erasmus has at least in St Matthew and St Luke put *aetas* for the *generatio* of the Vulg., making but an ill improvement. Here Dorner happily sees the truth, and restores its due honour to an interpretation hitherto almost rejected. Upon right grounds he builds the inference: Quare omnes reor concessuros, vocem γενεά, si eam vertas aetas, multas easque plane insuperabiles ciere difficultates, contextum vero et orationes progressum flagitare significationem gentis, nempe Judaeorum. With especial truth and force he notices that vers. 34 and 36 would contradict each other if Christ announced everything still for the same generation;—as well as that the first Christians, nay, the Apostles, would not possibly have continued to *wait for* Him, when Israel was not converted and Christ did *not* come; therefore that they cannot have so understood the word.

Hosted by Google

led the way, has proved with the most perfect demonstration that the fact is not as those critics supposed; and we very thankfully accept this, as it was by no means our wish even from the first (in the inexact expression of the first edition) to proceed *relaxando imperio philologico, renuente philologiâ.*[1] But it was overlooked, with still greater injustice, that after all even a seeming contradiction with the classical Greek usage may lose its force when an expression can be shown to bear the peculiar stamp of biblical usage, from the Old Testament downwards *This* latter, and, properly speaking, decisive, proof, which Dorner has merely touched, I on my part give here as a necessary supplement to his demonstration, and earnestly request that he will consider it.

Already in the prophetical usage of דּוֹר הַזֶּה in the Old Testament (frequently enough, comp. also הַמְּשֻׁבָּבָה הַרָּעָה הַזֹּאת Jer. viii. 3. LXX. γενεά) do we find that connection of the fathers with the children, which afterwards recurs in the discourses of Christ, now reaching forwards, now backwards. In confirmation of this we have, immediately above in Matt. xxiii. 36, a very decisive parallel. For, as there not merely the then present, last, *generation* was meant, but, including *backwards* the entire race as one stock and lineage, the entire people who are judged in the last generation (for at ver. 35 it is said: *Ye* have killed);—so the term here has the same signification pointing *forwards*. Just because the children are like the fathers, γενεά in reference to the γεννήματα ἐχιδνῶν passes beyond the *species* into the idea of the γένος; and *this* (as at all events *may* grammatically lie in the γενεά, *even if* no such passages occurred besides those in the LXX.) is the proper sense of this expression, when it is used concerning *Israel*. Not merely, to speak with Dorner, significatio gentis *acuitur* in voce γενεά, si usurpatur de gente aliqua, quae est una inter alias. Sic enim est una et singularis, ut differat ab aliis, et peculiari quadam natura insignis sit seu *indole*. Quare γενεά non solum universim denotat gentem seu genus, sed notæ specificæ et singularis genus quoddam seu gentem. Not merely so;—rather is Israel as this דּוֹר, or

[1] Recently Hebart (Die zweite sichtbare Zukunft Christi, Erlangen 1850, p. 43) has likewise referred simply to Homer, to a passage overlooked by Dorner.

Hosted by Google

this γενεά, always designated with the accessory idea of *evil*. Such is, in particular, the meaning of Luke xvii. 25 (of this evil generation, the unbelieving and perverse, Matt. xvii. 17); and with this are then connected such passages as Luke xvi. 8, where the two γενεαί or γένη are contrasted: Acts ii. 40; Phil. ii. 15, the perverse generation of unbelievers; 1 Pet. ii. 9 the elect γένος or nation. All these passages are far enough removed from the more limited idea of generation;[1] so as to warrant us in understanding the same thing here by ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη as is meant in Luke ver. 23 by ὁ λαὸς οὗτος—a very evident, and almost decisive parallel! When Olshausen admits "that everything includes at the same time its further reference to the future"—we are entitled to ask: *What* further reference then does this γενεά include, if not the wondrous *continuance of* Israel even to the end, for which it is spared? We cannot even say here, with many, that the expression is transferred from the type to the antitype; that Christ speaks "with intentional *ambiguity*," so that the expression might denote as well the generation of His time as the Jewish people as a whole;[2] that He says "in a certain double sense,—This generation of the men now living shall not pass away until all has come to pass that has reference to Jerusalem; and this generation, the people of Israel, shall not pass away until everything further has come to pass."[3] For ἡ γενεὰ αὕτη does not at all mean a generation of men in general, but what Christ has everywhere before designated by this, viz., *the corrupt Israel;* and πάντα ταῦτα has now nothing more to do with the destruction of Jerusalem. *This* rather is the ὀξύμωρον of the ambiguous expression: this generation will, as it were, not die; it will propagate itself in children and children's children, as a generation ever the same as the present;[4] this generation which rejects Me will so remain until it again cries Hosanna to Me in truth! The withered fig-tree will stand until it

[1] Also in the LXX. γενεά stands often not merely for דּוֹר (as, for example, Ps. xcv. 10), but often more generally for מוֹלֶדֶת, patria, Num. x. 30, for מִשְׁפָּחָה Lev. xxv. 41; Jer. viii. 3; even for עַם Lev. xx. 18.

[2] Tippleskirch's Zwanzig Predigten aus Rom, p. 13.

[3] Schmieder's Predigten zu Rom und Pforte, p. 108.

[4] Alford has correctly expressed it in the sense given above: "Never were a nation so completely one γενεά, in all accuracy of meaning, as the Jewish people."

Hosted by Google

again puts forth shoots! Observe here that the οὐ μὴ παρέλθῃ is quite parallel with the παρελεύσεται in reference to heaven and earth! And thus we have, in the words of Christ, a most significant reference to the historical miracle of the hand of God upon Israel (according to that ancient word of Balaam, Num. xxiii. 9), whose continued separate existence, ever maintaining the same nature and character of one race even under the curse, mocks the power and cunning of all nations, and contradicts all the usual order of history. It is related that a prince once asked a preacher[1] to mention to him a convincing argument for the truth of the Bible in one word; and the striking answer was, "*The Jews.*"[2] After these explanations it will be unnecessary to refute other more singular interpretations of γενεά; such as that which understands the nation of believers, Christendom,[3] or that which has been brought forward by the Irvingites.[4]

Ver. 35. That which at the beginning in the Sermon on the Mount, chap. v. 18, and then again at Luke xvi. 17, was said of the law; that which already in the Old Testament was testified of the *word of God* in general (Ps. cxix. 89, 96; Is. xl. 8)—does our Lord here affirm of *His* words whose prophecy will therefore also not fail of fulfilment. It will rather obtain its entire fulfil-

[1] According to Eyth (Klassiker and Bibel) it was Frederick the Great and a learned man.

[2] Hamann expresses it more fully: "The far greater, immoveably abiding, sign and wonder of a burning, unconsumed bush, in the colonies of that *extraordinary race of men* scattered even to this day over the wide world —speaking pillars of salt for the truth and certainty of the judgments once revealed in the old valley of vision and long since fulfilled, pledge and security for the hitherto as yet concealed treasure of those promises of grace and blessings with which heaven and earth are pregnant."

[3] So Origen, Chrysostom, and others. Dr Paulus: "This my spiritual posterity, Christendom, shall survive it." With him Lange agrees: "This race of men planted by Me, viz., believers, the disciples of Jesus as an imperishable race—this new race of men, noble race of Christians, the eternal spiritual generation—there will always be a Christian people." That this is meant "decidedly appears from the connection which he shows;"—but we put another connection in opposition, and think it very flat to find here the assurance "that there will always be Christians!"

[4] That generation which will *then* survive the before-mentioned signs, so that all will take place within the limits of a generation. John Hooper, The Translation, etc., p. 15. Das prophetische Wort. p. 42. Compare against this Tholuck's Litt. Anz. 1848, p. 270.

Hosted by Google

ment, and the word of God be established in everlasting continuance, precisely then, *when* heaven and earth shall pass away, and their present form be changed into a new one. First earthquakes, figuratively and literally (vers. 6, 7); then shaking of the heavens in the same twofold sense (ver. 29); finally, in the third epoch and last coming, to which Christ here *glances forward* in the Future, that passing away of the heavens and the earth properly speaking, which is predicted in Is. li. 6; Ps. cii. 27; 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10; Rev. xx. 11, xxi. 1. At present, indeed, the fools say: Heaven and earth shall abide for ever, there shall be no last day, Christ's words shall pass away in the course of time—but we wait for the test.

Ver. 36. Our Lord, having reached this point, now in the first place again connects together the last day of His coming with that announced at ver. 30, comprising them in the one ἡμέρα ἐκείνη or יוֹם הַהוּא (chap. vii. 22); and He assures us that His people shall indeed perceive the ἐγγὺς ἐπὶ θύραις, but that the exact determination of the time (for this is what is meant by καὶ ὥρα) is and remains what the Father reserves for Himself alone. Not even "the decree of the watchers" in heaven (Dan. iv. 10, 14), which has many other times and hours in its knowledge, knows *this day;* but the Father alone, in the reserved, eternal decree:—what a word against all such apocalyptic curiosity as degenerates into special reckonings of time! St Mark expressly says also οὐδὲ ὁ υἱός; St Matthew has omitted this, but not from regard to the readers of the first Gospel (who, besides, rather entertained Ebionite views of Christ); for it is included in his ὁ πατὴρ μόνος, just as in chap. xx. 23 the like antithesis occurs. *The Son* also knew not—He said of so important a thing as this, I also know it not:—what a rebuke to the false theology which, without understanding the complete humanity of Christ, transfers the *communicatio idiomatum* into the state of His humiliation; and which, from the earliest times, could only wrest and trifle with this word.[1] He does not say, "This I have not to tell *you*, I know it not *for you*"—but "*the Son* knoweth it not;" thus He speaks of Himself simply as of

[1] As, for example, one may read in the Evang. Kirchenz. 1828, p. 797. Ambrose de fide v. 8 appealed to old Greek manuscripts in which these words are not found; but who ventured to add them?

Hosted by Google

the Father and *the angels*. It is wrong also to have recourse to the artificial distinction that *as man* He knew it not, although as God He knew it; for such knowing and not-knowing at the same time severs the unity of the God-human person, and is impossible in the Son of Man, who is *the Son* indeed, but emptied of His glory. It is not enough to say with Bengel, Quia non habuit in mandatis, ut diceret diem illum; or with Melancthon (Epist. ad Matthes.) profitetur se nescire, in quantum missus est ad ministerium evangelii, nescit ea *nobis*;[1]—but for Himself and His own *course of faith*, in which, as our Leader, He must be like unto us (Heb. xii. 2), He *could not*, and was *not permitted to know* many things, and chiefly this. It is also too great a refinement to which some have recourse in order yet to find something of the *communicatio idiomatum*, when (as Lange), instead of allowing to this not-knowing the force of a "positive ignorance," according to the text, they merely understand it thus far, that Christ in His sphere of vision *would not* reflect upon it, in opposition to the sinful wish to know on the part of His disciples. Compare on this the convincing refutation which Liebner has given in his Dogmatik (i. 1, p. 22). We will allow nothing to explain away this rebuke addressed to that false curiosity and speculation which anticipates faith, and admits of no *Nescio!* The Father knows the day;—the Son knew it not then when He thus spake;—and *the Spirit?* He indeed knows all things, and searcheth also the deep things of God, 1 Cor. ii. 10. Therefore the Spirit in the Father knew, the Spirit in the Son knew not: here, however, is the limit of our understanding as regards the mystery of the incarnation. Did the risen Lord know afterwards when He spake as in Acts i. 7? The words "it is not for you" at the beginning, are in favour of an affirmative answer; while those at the end "the Father hath put it in His own power" seem to say No. Indeed, we also might say here, "we know not," if there were not other grounds for believing that He who was about to ascend into heaven then knew. But that the ascended One, who now sits at God's right hand, knows all things, is quite certain; we doubt however very much whether, in the δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ Rev. i. 1, the revela-

[1] Much earlier had Augustine said: nescit—non ad cognoscendum, sed ad proponendum. Hilarius: non sibi nescivit, sed nobis.

Hosted by Google

tion of the day and the hour is also included, as at least the calculations *hitherto* seem to show; and in our simplicity we think that no believer, even to the end, has a right to know more than the Son knew in the days of His flesh.[1]

Vers. 37–39. Already in Luke xvii. had our Lord spoken similarly, with the addition of the times of Lot; for *all* strikingly prominent judgments of God, from the beginning, form a typical perspective, each reflecting itself in the other. This Christ here teaches, at the same time confirming the historical truth of that flood which swept away *all*, and that entering into the ark; declaring them to be as historically true as one day His own παρουσία will be. St Peter adduces the same parallel against the mockers, 2 Pet. iii. 5, 6. It is significantly not the crimes and vices of which the earth was then full, that are here mentioned—"these were details which arose on the broad ground of the earthly mind." (Braune.) Christ marks and describes, as the proper character and point of comparison, merely this *earthly mind*, which despises God's word and warning. After the general proposition, ver. 37, it follows more particularly: they lived in earthly enjoyments,[2] plans and projects (Luke xvii. 28), carried on merchandise, planting, building, as looking forward to a secure future—and cared not, or knew not, what was hanging over them, because, although it was indeed foretold to them, yet the day and the hour had not expressly been revealed. So shall also the παρουσία of the Son of Man be—now with a return to the more general expression, ver. 27, although in the first place, ver. 30 is meant. For, Christ is showing the similarity of all judgments; and in Jerusalem, even to the last moment, a blind security prevailed to a fearful extent. See here, at the same time, the reason why the wisdom of God reserves the day in His own power: in order that the righteous

[1] "If the coming of Christ will be as a thief in the night, then can neither political arithmetic nor prophetical chronologies fix the day; and, to speak humanly, he who betrays the thief, may reckon at least on the displeasure of Satan for such revelations." Hamann.

[2] *They drank*—wine also before the flood? The parallels, Matt. ver. 49 and Luke ver. 34, leave us to suppose this. *We* at least read in Gen. ix. 20, nothing of a first introduction of the vine, this "second tree of the knowledge of good and evil,"—and Matt. xxvi. 29 shows us on the new earth what was therefore also from the beginning.

Hosted by Google

separation may be manifest between those who despise His word, and those who do not. It is, moreover, easy to understand how this security is not inconsistent with that fear, Luke, vers. 25, 26. They say: *it is peace!* and act outwardly as if it were so; but in their hearts and consciences the pangs of travail for the judgment are preparing themselves. 1 Thess. v. 3. (Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angit.)

St Luke, having already at an earlier place recorded these words of Christ, now gives instead of them, vers. 34–36, another conclusion of the discourse: this may perhaps be intended to represent the essential import of Matt. vers. 43–51, but it may also be an actual supplement of words originally spoken by our Lord. Κραιπάλη καὶ μέθη is, it is true, not precisely eating and drinking *excessively*, yet it is a general expression for all that indulgence in bodily and earthly enjoyments which clogs the *heart* and stupifies the inner man. This, however, is again a further warning figure for every sort of intoxication which may be opposed to sobriety and being filled with the Spirit (Rom. xiii. 13; Eph. v. 18; 2 Thess. v. 6, 7; 1 Pet. iv. 7, 8) —even were it the most refined, seemingly spiritual, yet sensuous intoxication in poetry, art, or the like. The μέριμναι βιωτικαί are only the other side of the same earthly mind; the two are essentially one and inseparable. Αἰφνίδιος ἐπιστῇ finds its literal echo again at 1 Thess. v. 3; just as the *praying always* enjoined by St Paul, ver. 17 (as in 1 Pet. iv. 8), points back to this discourse of our Lord. "As a *snare* on all them that dwell on the earth"—reminds us of Is. xxiv. 17; and the dwelling upon the earth again indicates the earthly character and mind, as frequently in the Apocalypse. "That ye may be *accounted worthy;*" as was said at Luke xx. 35, and as the Apostle again repeats at 2 Thess. i. 5. Accounted worthy *to escape*—this points back to the first fleeing from the judgment of Jerusalem (Luke ver. 21; Matt. ver. 16) in the grand and significant unity of the whole; it is likewise, however, one of the manifest distinctions between the two, and is meant to say, In that second calamity it will no longer be possible thus to escape to the mountain, to a Pella! Finally, "*to stand* before the Son of Man:"—first of all, to stand as one escaped from the judgment, saved from the wrath and judgment (Rev. vi. 17;

Hosted by Google

Ps. lxxvi. 7; Nah. i. 6); but, then, at the same time, as the highest and last thing of which we can be made or thought worthy, viz., as heirs of His kingdom to stand before Him for ever, to serve and worship Him, and behold His face (Rev. xxii. 3, 4).

Vers. 40, 41. With the twice repeated declaration, So also shall the coming of the Son of Man be! and the *glance back* to its *earliest* type, Christ now makes all His disclosures (which after all reach further and contain far more than we understand) *lead back* to the general warning, *Beware!* With this He began all, and with this He will end all; the advance made, however, from the first to the second consists in this, that the first warning, viz., the end cometh *not yet so soon!* is now changed into the opposite, Christ cometh unexpectedly, *be always ready!* This seeming contrast, in which when rightly understood there is perfect harmony, and which offers much material for thought, belongs also to the wondrously profound plan of the discourse; and so in like manner the contrast, thus sublimely harmonised only in the discourses of Christ, between the abstract and the concrete in the depths of all truth,—here between the authoritative announcements, grasping the future as the present reality, and the simplest most condescending tone of instruction in closely connecting parables. Only *read* and *hear* the whole again from ver. 5 onwards, in order to feel how sublimely beyond comparison, with what mildness in the midst of majesty, with what a holy play of imperturbably tranquil wisdom in the midst of world-judging severity, the prophetical discourse now passes into the *parabolical.* The first *transition* is formed by the two sentences in vers. 40, 41, which still connect themselves with the foregoing prophecy, and yet are already spoken in the admonishing form of the parable. The two in the field and two at the mill are not selected in order to indicate that common people also shall be worthy of the kingdom (as Grotius thinks), or that nothing depends on worldly rank or position (as Braune arbitrarily finds only the masters in the field, the slaves at the mill), or even (what is quite self-evident) that nothing depends on sex, man or woman; but the whole is meant first of all prophetically to say, that when the work of life is going on, ver. 38, the separating judgment will *break in.* Then this separation is portrayed as

Hosted by Google

breaking through all human fellowship: the foolish person relied upon his outward and earthly fellowship with the wise, and thought himself as secure as his companion. (Luke xvii. 34, still more strongly the two in one bed whom the same night separates.) It is also thereby hinted, that those who are worthy of the kingdom, with all their internal readiness of watching and praying, yet do not idly separate themselves from the business and order of life. In the *parabolical* sense, however, they are at the same time male and female labourers in the service of Christ, who do not all stand before Him—as a transition to the parables of the servants (and virgins). Finally, it is not to be mistaken, that the description in its antithesis to vers. 16–18 denotes quite different relations: the "being *taken*" is more than the fleeing there; but the "being *left*" is also, on the other hand, not yet that which, in the following chapter, the last scene before the judgment-throne of the King will announce.

Vers. 42–44. There is now a return from the third person to the direct *address:* because, according to ver. 36, no one can be sure at any time whatsoever that the Lord will not come to him; because at all events every human life has its last day at death, its judgment already very closely connected with the last judgment. The not-knowing stands in each of these three verses, while in the midst (ver. 43) is the true γινώσκειν. Christ comes to His people as *their Lord*, to the unfaithful and secure as a *thief* in the night (Obad. 5; Rev. iii. 3, xvi. 15); to both as the *Son of Man*. Our Lord had already, Luke xii. 39, 40, spoken of His coming as a *thief* in the same words;[1] and the same figure recurs at last in the Apocalypse. So His Spirit very fully comments upon this saying by the Apostle at 1 Thess. v. 1–10: comp. there ver. 7 with Matt. ver. 49.

FIRST PARABLE: THE FAITHFUL AND WISE SERVANT.

(Matt. xxiv. 45–51; Mark xiii. 34–37; [Luke xii. 42–46].)

We are now to consider the first of the three parables which

[1] Compare there ver. 33, as in the Sermon on the Mount; from which we may see what the Judge, as a thief in the night, will suddenly take away.

Hosted by Google

follow in full, forming in St Matthew the continuation of the discourse. The first and third, according to St Luke, our Lord had already spoken; but, as we in simplicity believe on the authority of St Matthew, He now at the end repeats them with special significance. His last discourses recorded by St John *before* the esoteric words spoken to His disciples are, in a great measure, references to what He had already spoken; as if He would now graciously and emphatically say, Behold, I have told it to you, remember it! See Luke xii., especially the connection with vers. 31–35 before.

This parable of the *faithful and wise servant* applies, as we may easily see, chiefly to the official servants of Christ in His house or His Church; yet, at the same time, it is meant (like that of the labourers in the vineyard) for all Christians in common, as afterwards at chap. xxv. 14–30 still more plainly appears. First of all is described the official commission, faithfulness, and reward of the good and true servant (ver. 45–47); in order then to place in opposition to him the bad servant, in his false wisdom, or wicked folly (ver. 48), his unfaithful conduct, ver. 49, his terrible recompense from the Lord, who comes unexpectedly upon him with the punishment, vers. 50, 51.

Vers. 45–47. *Who* is this faithful and wise servant whom I will now describe? Thus does Christ ask, to awaken and admonish; so that each one may ask himself, Is it I? Does this picture answer to me? At the same time the question signifies what Luther, on Luke xii., has rightly paraphrased thus: "What a great thing it is to find such a servant! Will many such be found when Christ cometh?" In St Luke the office was still more especially denoted by *οἰκονόμος*, as also the burning lights and the marriage, vers. 35, 36—already a general anticipation of the parable of the virgins, which at last appears as a separate parable. All such affinity in the manifold discourses of Christ, at different times, is far more naturally explained on the supposition that He actually thus manifoldly yet harmoniously spake, than by the now favourite supposition of a confused arrangement on the part of the Evangelists. *Faithful and wise:* the first stands before the other, because the true wisdom of the heart that looks simply to the one thing (Luke ver. 34) proceeds from faithfulness, and is one with it. Yet so far as this is still

Hosted by Google

wanting in us, we may inversely be incited to faithfulness at least from considerations of *prudence;* this salutary *fear* Christ will warningly and condescendingly recommend to us, at all events besides the *love* which indeed alone would be the entire faithfulness. He knows well the weakness which, even to the end, needs both the alluring and threatening presentment of reward or judgment; and He requires not that proud self-deception of the *amour pur*. The meat which the steward, placed over the domestic servants, is to give out, is His word for His servants; all labour of love towards the brethren, according to the talent of grace intrusted to him, which is to be profitably employed for the good of all. The article τὴν τροφήν means here the same which, in Luke xii., is called τὸ σιτομέτριον; and points to the ὀρθοτομεῖν, 2 Tim. ii. 15, in its full signification: To every one his due, undiminished and unadulterated, wisely and faithfully, according to need and right.[1] The ἐν καιρῷ beside it has the like twofold signification: at the just and fitting season, so that it be neither neglectfully withheld nor inconsiderately given in over-abundance. Whom the Lord finds *so* doing He pronounces *blessed:* first of all, because he is already blessed in his deed (Jam. i. 25)—then because it is a new blessedness to him so to be *found* of his Lord; finally, the Lord promises to him a high promotion from a few things to many things (chap. xxv. 21, comp. 1 Tim. iii. 13); nay, He here already says more than afterwards (here again the *difference* between the intermediate and final decision is intended to appear), inasmuch as *every* such servant is set over *all* the goods of his lord! See the gradation of the promises, Rev. ii. 26, iii. 21, on to xxi. 7. Here, therefore, there is a glance forward to the last, highest reward; just as in the antithesis, ver. 51, the punishment already points beyond the being merely left without, vers. 40, 41, chap. xxv. 11, 12. For, the intermediate sentence upon the servants at the appearing of the kingdom stands already in close connection with the final and eternal one.

Vers. 48–51. Here we are given to understand that by all means a χρονίζειν is to be expected, as in chap. xxv. 5; comp. Hab. ii. 3. That which the preacher, Eccles. viii. 11, laments as

[1] Roos: He is not to shake out of his school-bag whatever may happen to be in it.

Hosted by Google

alas! the prevalent experience; that which, even in the poem of old Homer, is shadowed forth by the unexpected return of Ulysses; happens in the case of *every other* bad servant, whom Christ at once puts in opposition to the former as a well-known person,—not asking now beforehand, Who is this? The examples of such are not rare. It is to be observed, moreover, that he also is a *servant*, placed in the same office, who still knows and presumes to say, *my Lord*—as he said in the good beginning of his faith and love. He also presumes not, with the mockers, altogether to deny the return of the Lord, at first even says only *in his heart*, It will yet be a long time! If such folly, however, has once found place in the unfaithful heart, there will then soon follow the outbreak of wicked conduct; he *begins* with an evil falling away, after the good beginning has ceased, to conduct himself ever more improperly; from the first beginnings of evil a more rapid advance is then made, because the evil element was already in these beginnings. The first and most immediate outbreak of pride and selfishness is the *beating* of the inferior servants, who yet before the Lord are his fellow-servants; *i.e.*, he plays the lord politely and mannerly at first, but soon more roughly, with quarrelsome controversy, with assumed lordship, becomes a priest and pope as much as he can, causes dispeace with violence and injustice, by the unconscionable abuse of the power and calling committed to him. This leads him ever deeper into sin; until, although calling himself a servant of the Lord, and confessing His name, he yet eats and drinks with the drunken, the secure of the world (ver. 38); whether it be in grossly overt act, or, as Christ says at last, with the *hypocrites*. Woe to him when the Lord suddenly comes. His severe judgment is denoted in the words διχοτομήσει αὐτόν —an expression into which many, as Grotius,[1] artificially insert the milder signification: He will, at the division of His house and house-servants, in the separation between the faithful and unfaithful, *cut him off*, and separate him:—to this the μέρος θήσει that follows corresponds only in appearance. For, διχοτομεῖν along with the αὐτόν can only mean to *cut asunder* (as the animal to be sacrificed, Ex. xxix. 17, LXX.); therefore for

[1] Even Zeller, in the Monatsblatt: "There will be a judicial division and separation, such as admits of no middle party!"

Hosted by Google

men that dreadful punishment in ancient times corresponding to our "quartering," which occurs Dan. ii. 5, iii. 29, in the Chaldee, as also Susanna ver. 59 (σχίσει μέσον), and which we find frequently in Greek and Roman writers.[1] This, then, remains a dreadful figure: in the background already a type and beginning of that punishment which, laying open the evil intents of the heart (Heb. iv. 12), puts its victim into the everlasting contradiction of dying, and yet not dying, misery; first of all, in reference to the coming of the Lord here meant, it is a designation of the judgment which suddenly removes the unfaithful servant, casts him down from on high, and brings him thoroughly into disgrace.[2]

St Mark, chap. xiii. 34–37, gives a short abridgment of Matt. xxiv. 43, with the *two parables of the servants*, xxiv. 45–51, and xxv. 14; and in this instance it is plainly seen to be such a summary of the main import. (See the conclusion of Mark's gospel, chap. xvi., which sums up in the same way.) Hence he has ἄνθρωπος ἀπόδημος, as Matt. xxv. 14, ἄνθρωπος ἀποδημῶν, and the servants in the plural. The rest is easily understood without special interpretation; only that the *porter* or door-keeper who is expressly named, and the four *night-watches*, are only a further filling up of the picture in this simple representation, which gives prominence only to the watching and *not sleeping* (even with a slight echo of the parable of the *virgins*). We have, therefore, in this instance hardly to interpret the *porter* separately; at all events, he ranks with the servants who are admonished to watch, and denotes at the same time the duty of every one in the place that belongs to him, also as door-keeper, to give attentive heed to the coming of the Lord, as well as to whatever else might come. Or, if "to every one his work" was allotted, might the *porter* perhaps be entrusted with that which pertained to the entering into and departing from the Church,

[1] In both one and the same, for example: *Herodotus*, of Pythius, who was cut asunder at the command of Xerxes, so that the two halves were laid on the way; *Horace*, Sat. i. 1, 100, securi divisit medium.

[2] Only not "the *divisions* by which the ministerial office loses its authority and power, falls asunder into dead parts."—(Lange). For this servant is not a collective designation of the office, but an individual of a class very common.

Hosted by Google

with the power to admit?[1] Since, however, in the explanation, such an office is not distinguished from the office, properly speaking, of giving meat, we rather recognise in St Mark only a variation resulting from a further extension of the picture. With such unity of the fundamental ideas, showing itself remarkably even in the strongest deviations from the literal word of Christ, we will therefore in simplicity hear *His holy Spirit* (who actually watches for all servants, and admonishes to watch; who in John x. 3, in another reference is called the *porter*) when He utters aloud the last word: What I say unto you, I say unto all, *Watch!*

SECOND PARABLE: THE WISE VIRGINS.

(Matt. xxv. 1–13.)

The *wisdom* in the former parable connected with faithfulness is now specially represented; as, immediately after, in the following parable, the faithfulness by itself. Already, in Luke xvi. 8–12, both were connected in such a manner as that Christ exhorted to faithfulness at least from considerations of wisdom or prudence; so as not eternally to perish from want, and in the time of reckoning to know whither to go. Here, however, the wisdom of the virgins, penetrating deeper and disclosing the heart, is so viewed as that all management of goods entrusted, all active performance of work committed, falls into the background, as compared with the state of the heart:—the wisdom of going out to meet the Bridegroom, waiting for Him, *watching* with a patient zeal, which has regard alone and entirely to His marriage. Thus does this middle parable stand significantly between the two others; and shows us the wisdom, as it not merely leads to faithfulness, but also proceeds from faithfulness, and is one with it. If ver. 13, at the conclusion (where the more extended reading also corresponds to the sense), as the link of transition to the following parable, sums up what was said chap. xxiv. 42, 36—so in ver. 10 αἱ ἕτοιμοι brings into prominence

[1] In which sense Braune then explains it of the preacher who baptizes and confirms, the teacher who conducts through the school.

Hosted by Google

the retrospect to ver. 44: the *readiness* is the watching and waiting of the heart for Him, which is represented in the burning of the diligently and carefully trimmed and tended lamps; just as in the same lamp there appears again, at the same time, the *effect* of the wise faithfulness, the life and actings of faith, which are in that case certainly not wanting. Finally, however, and this is of great importance for the understanding of the parable, the *foolish* virgins receive by no means so severe a recompense as the *wicked* and *unprofitable* servant, but are merely in this instance *shut out*, as having come too late; this wisdom or folly is therefore not quite one and the same with that described at Matt. vii. 24–27, in so far as both parties in this parable are virgins. Again, the wise *virgins* are also not *commended*, as the servants were, on account of their work; the going in to the marriage says *here* enough.

Vers. 1, 2. So far Olshausen has rightly seen, that these virgins denote rather the passive love to Christ, as the servants rather the active employment in His service; and that this distinction represents itself in different persons, according to the type of John and Peter, Mary and Martha. But we would lay a stronger emphasis upon that which he has merely noticed as the principal sense, which only includes the former application; namely, that virgins and servants are *the same persons* viewed under different aspects. The internal aspect, that namely of the disposition of heart which lies at the foundation, remains, in all, the passive watching and waiting of the attached heart; the outer side, on the other hand, which appears in the revelation made by the separating judgment, is the exercise and profitable employment by the servants of the power and gifts which they have received. The many-sidedness, resembling the play of colours in a diamond, which is specially characteristic of this last trilogy of parables,—in which, at the conclusion of the discourses, the parabolic wisdom of Christ finds its consummation,[1] —is meant to say and hint much on all sides, and is far from being exhausted by a single acknowledged reference. Thus has our Lord (as C. H. Rieger rightly sees) first of all, in chap. xxiv.

[1] Which only unfold their entire meaning in their *connection*; therefore, even on this account, it is certain that it is not merely the Evangelist who has thus put them together.

Hosted by Google

vers. 38, 39, announced the general security of the *great mass*, such as He will find at His coming; then in vers. 45–51 chiefly the corruption and falling away of those who are *teachers* in His church; now, however, He predicts also the becoming remiss and remaining behind of the *noblest souls*, who have joined themselves to the bride. Yet this also is only an accompanying accessory sense; for the ten virgins comprehend the entire Church of Christ, actually entered upon its Divine calling. *Then* shall *the kingdom of heaven* be like—when the Lord and Bridegroom comes; the state of this Church, which is called to Him as Bride, will manifest that not all who belong to it have in entire faithfulness wisely prepared themselves. Therefore more exactly: first the state of the world in general; then the state of the *outward church* in which the evil servants create disturbance and confusion; finally, even the divided state of the inner true Church. For, the foolish virgins, who remain without, are by no means one and the same with the evil servants who are cut asunder. *The kingdom of heaven:* the collective company of those in whom it more or less subsists upon earth, who know that they are called thereto and wait for its appearing. *Ten* is in general the number denoting completeness (as also in the ten servants, Luke xix. 13); according to the Jewish ordinance ten persons formed a Passover-family; then also a church, assembly or קָהָל; in like manner, at a marriage, at least ten bridesmaids were appointed. Therefore these ten together are the Church; their relation to the *bride* in this marriage is precisely such as was said already, at chap. xxii., of the guests. Every church which belongs to the great Church is also, on its part, a virgin presented to Christ (2 Cor. xi. 2). Accordingly, it may be supposed that, besides the application to individual souls, which retains its truth in the first place, there are indicated in the prophetic background of the τότε ὁμοιωθήσεται (in which may lie many things now unknown) different *churches*, whose predominant character in their relation to Christ (as in those in the Apocalypse) will at last so represent itself.[1] Finally,

[1] Only that we are *not* to take this sense, which applies to collective bodies, congregations, churches, also peoples and nationalities, as the plain, first, and direct sense; though many do so (comp. Zeller's Monatsbl. 1837, No. 10) on the ground that prophets and apostles (2 Cor. xi. 2) always

Hosted by Google

when we look back to Ps. xlv. 14, 15, understood in a different way certainly from that of the current exegesis, it may appear that the bride, in the most proper sense, is Israel at last restored; while these virgins are the nations joined to it, *i.e.*, churches out of the heathen world.

Something to this effect is probably meant by the reading (not to be despised when viewed at least as bearing witness to an earlier interpretation), which adds in ver. 1: to meet the bridegroom *and the bride*.[1] In the parable this signifies, first of all, that they betook themselves to the house of the bride, there, as belonging to her, to wait until they were fetched away by the bridegroom. For such was the custom which lies at the foundation of the entire parable; late in the evening, not indeed till the night, the bridegroom came with his friends (see on Matt. ix. 15) to conduct the bride with her virgins in the festal procession with torches to the nuptial supper. This, in its entire scope and aim, is what is meant already by the εἰς ἀπάντησιν τοῦ νυμφίου, that they *go out* from their houses in order to assemble around the bride; this first going out is by no means a prolepsis of the subsequent one at ver. 6, as if it were only meant here. They would go out to meet him, they made preparation for this; but they were in the house of the bride, where the ἀπάντησις or preparation, the waiting for the coming one, took place.[2] And when now he came, it was said again differently, *Go ye out* to meet him! But what is the signification of all these circumstances? The first going out is the going out from the world and from self, whereby they become virgins belonging to the Bride; the second is the last joyous readiness which meets the coming of the Lord. Whether precisely that going out from Babylon required by many, in particular "out of a false Babylonish union" (as the cry is now, with which Father Zeller almost agrees)—we leave entirely aside; the text contains nothing of this, and is rather, according to chap. xxiv. 26, to be

use the word virgin only in this sense. Here in the parable of Christ, all that is said of the virgins applies undeniably *in the first place* to individual persons, and only in comparison with them to collective bodies.

[1] Not merely in the strongly interpolated Cod. D., but also Vulg. *sponso et sponsæ;* even the significant Syrian Peschito לאורע חתנא וכלתא.

[2] They did not, therefore, fall asleep by the way in the street.

Hosted by Google

kept free from all such *outward dealing* with its profound meaning. This, however, is further to be well observed, that both parties *are* virgins before Christ, not merely before the world; there is among them no hypocrite or harlot (who would be quite out of keeping with such a company); they all go out, all go to *meet* Him; and that *not* as the present time drives us all, even the strangers and harlots without, against their will towards the coming One, but with a good foundation and beginning of their own will, faith, and mind turned to the Bridegroom. Both parties wait for—"an improvement in the world?" That is not enough! They go out to meet not a pseudo-Messiah of the political kingdom of heaven, as at present the Jews who cry for emancipation in order to unity with Christendom without Christ—not "the ideal bridegroom, who at length celebrates his nuptial festival upon earth in a purified system of doctrine, and in general virtue"—but as it quite simply stands in the text, *the Bridegroom*, the true and genuine Bridegroom. We cannot, therefore, in this instance agree with V. Meyer's interpretation of the parable (Blätter für höh. Wahrh. vii. 247), which indeed, in the extended application, expresses much that is profound, striking, and in itself true, but which, by a false exegesis, departs from the essentially narrower fundamental sense of the whole. These Christians and Christian societies are *virgins:* in order to this it is not enough that they "do not stand in an attitude of rebellion against the one true God, which the Scripture calls whoredom, and that they all outwardly maintain a virtuous walk, or even, at least, preach it"—but they are also not disloyal to Christ, the Lord and Head of His Church, the Bridegroom. For even that wicked servant, the hypocrite, said, "My Lord"—but these virgins are completely parallel with those who, afterwards at ver. 24, are called *His own servants*, each of whom actually received and took his talent of grace from the Lord, and did not throw it away, but only did not faithfully and diligently enough trade with it. Nothing is here said of Christians or Christian Churches which are *fallen away;* these, however much or little they may still retain of His name and confession, yet, before the Lord, belong to the heathen and the children of this world. Therefore the foolish virgins are certainly not those who "demean themselves sentimentally towards Him who calls Himself the Bridegroom of the Church and

Hosted by Google

of the soul; whose love to Him and desire for union with Him is likewise idolatry, Jesulatry." Not those who inwardly pay homage to "Astarte together with Baal, the moon-goddess of false philosophy, who therefore neither practically nor theoretically bear with justice the name of virgins"—these are *just on this account not* foolish virgins, for Christ *gives* the name to them not without justice. But they are those who on the whole have continued in the true doctrine; and, still more, have not merely the knowledge of Christ, but also a waiting and preparation for Him in its beginning; who have also lamps burning with the oil of the Spirit, an inner life kindled from above. One may work diligently as a servant or maid in the field and at the mill, without the perverseness of the evil servant, and yet not even be a foolish *virgin:* this name always signifies much, although of course it does not apply to the foolish ones in the etnire unmixed emphasis with which it is used in Rev. xiv. 4.—The article *καὶ αἱ πέντε μωραί* now, in the first place, brings forward these foolish ones as a warning principal figure in the parable; but will thereby, at the same time, say: *Even* of the ten virgins there were only five wise, *the other five* were, alas, all foolish! Whether in this equal number a precisely corresponding truth is to be sought is a question to which we venture, with Pfenninger, to answer: "One would almost think so."

Vers. 3, 4. That the *λαμπάδες* do not signify lamps, as we are accustomed to understand the term, but the ancient torches, chiefly marriage-torches, which at the same time were lamps,[1] we indeed believe; although we do not hold it to be decided and important. At all events we admit that Winer is right in maintaining that Jahn unjustly applies to our parable the later custom of bearing wooden staves with a vessel of oil above. And what is very important, the *ἀγγεῖα* are certainly not these bowls of oil which were on the torches themselves; but (as the parallel *αὐτῶν*, of the vessels and lamps, and the *μετά* shows) a special supply by way of precaution, so as to be able to fill again: to erase this from the picture, is to take away the principal feature. The virgins have all not merely

[1] So that the bowl of oil with the wick was somehow fastened to the stick above.

Hosted by Google

lamps, all too have oil *in their lamps*, so that these *burn* for the present. Consequently, the ancient interpretation (combated by Calvin) which finds here only the empty appearance; as well as the ordinary preaching, founded upon that interpretation, concerning dead faith, lamps without oil, or even without flame; is a perversion of this text, and passes by the warning of Christ, which reaches much deeper.[1] Again: foolish virgins are not hypocrites or false Christians, who have the form of godliness altogether without the substance;—*not* "such as carry in their hands only the hollow, dry vessel of their selfishness." For, their lamps also burn; nay they burn long, even to the last late moment; and were therefore perhaps at first so copiously filled that, for this reason, no further stock seemed to be necessary. They thought, "It burns at first, and that clearly enough; so that it will certainly suffice." *Here* lies the critical point of difference, and nowhere else; Calvin hits the point when he says: in eo vertitur summa parabolæ, quod non satis est ad officium *semel* accinctos *fuisse* et paratos, nisi ad finem usque duremus. Compare in general Luke xiii. 24. What are the *lamps?* The hearts that are turned towards, prepared for, awaiting the heavenly treasure, the joyful supper, the king of the feast, the Bridegroom. They burn with the flame of spiritual life, illuminated and kindled by God. *Oil* also is not altogether wanting to the foolish virgins; their lamps have rather such abundant measure of it that they have become secure: according to the general symbology of the Scripture, this is the Holy *Spirit* who nourishes the flame of life in the heart, which without Him holds merely a dry, extinguished wick in the bowl. And now, what are the special *vessels* in addition; and the *supply*

[1] As in a certain sermon, for example, it is expressed thus: "Who carry the lamp of Christianity in their hands, but the *light* is wanting!" So Lössel's Fisher (1845 Nr. 47) says *against* the text: "they have only the dry lamp!" In that case Christ would certainly not have put five against five, or ten against ten. We cannot understand how Jul. Müller (Deutsche Zeitchr. 1850, p. 32) can think the ancient interpretation, that the *burning* lamps without a supply of oil are the "outward profession," to be "more natural." Assuredly, the lamps are not merely "forms of faith"—these virgins of the Bridegroom are not merely "dead members of the church, destitute of the Spirit," as even Lange enigmatically maintains.

Hosted by Google

of oil in them over and above what consumes itself in the lamp, from one moment to the other? We may speak of this with all kinds of words, if we only mean, understand, and hold the secret thing which it is hard to put into words. V. Meyer's note, "Understand here the right *measure* of faith, the inward anointing of the Spirit, the true wisdom"—is we think so far right; but not the further antithesis, "as opposed to *outward* ecclesiastical or moral character," etc. For the lamp of the foolish virgins, which burns even to the last, is more than this outward character; thus the warning would fail to hit precisely those who are warned, who joyfully say, My lamp burns indeed most brightly! If the lamp is my heart, as before said, then the vessel containing the additional supply is my whole remaining personality, body, soul, and spirit (2 Cor. iv. 7), which also must be well furnished with oil, sanctified throughout; in order that from thence a constant influx may come into the weak heart, in which the oil burns itself away by the flame. The *taking* the oil *with them* in the vessels, prudently collecting it and laying it up, corresponds in a certain measure to the faithful trading and making profit on the part of the servants afterwards, as oil and flame are what is given by the Lord; those and those only take oil with them who allow to be given to them ever anew in addition to, and besides, that which they have; who *watch* so that their flame may not go out, so as to give diligence to make their calling and election sure (2 Pet. i. 10). Whose lamp goes not out even during the night (Prov. xxxi. 18). The five wise virgins, in the simplicity which did not thus severely test their companions, have not known and admonished the foolish ones; but the coming of the Lord will discover them, and put them to shame. "We must call it *virgin folly*, folly of the children of light in their generation, when believing souls let themselves be satisfied with the first tasting of the good Word of God, and the powers of the world to come; when they deem it sufficient to possess within them some light, and some fire of love for to-day, but are regardless of more abundant gain, in order to the strengthening and growth of their inward man." (Feldhoff.)

Vers. 5–7. That the bridegroom will *delay*, and let himself be waited for longer than was at first *thought*, Christ now says

Hosted by Google

openly, as in chap. xxiv. 48 He had already hinted this; the error of the virgins now, however, was the opposite of the thoughts of that evil servant. He thought, My lord cometh not for a long time yet! But these, The bridegroom will certainly not let us wait long for him! Thus those who expected Him too soon, and those who expected Him too late, fall both into a nearly similar fate, when now He comes to both unexpectedly.[1] They were wrong in their calculation; He remained away when the lamps burned most brightly, and when every footstep was joyfully listened to: this alas had an ill effect upon the *entire* Church of the faithful, and yet was necessary as a trial in order to their separation. They all became drowsy, *all* even actually slept, not excepting the wise: that is indeed the true midnight, when those also who should be watching are asleep. Wesley in vain tries to escape by the false rendering: they were all "easy and quiet," the wise enjoyed a true, the foolish a false peace! True, if it were said—The one part slept through carelessness, the other through confidence in their preparation;—there lies in this a truth, but yet the sleeping of the wise virgins remains a *weakness*. "This is the last trial of the virgins, in which they could not stand of themselves. Yet we see that the wise virgins are *kept* also during their slumbering, and their oil-vessels no one dare take from them; Christ watches over them with His compassion, the keeper of Israel slumbers not nor sleeps." (V. Meyer.) Their weakness is not judged so as to make them ashamed; for "there certainly remains a difference between the sleep of the wise, and that of the foolish virgins"—as Lisco says, and Cant. v. 2 shadows forth. Rightly and simply the Berlenburger Bible says: "They were also not without nature. But they knew that a drowsiness was in their nature, and therefore provided themselves well with oil, so that all notwithstanding would be ready; just as people are wont in the night to keep the tinder-box and everything in readiness, whereby they may at once strike a light." They had perhaps, just before, paid attention to their lamps, and given

[1] Zeller: The delay was not objective, it was no delay on the part of the Bridegroom, who wisely allows the night of judgments to come beforehand; it was only subjectively, in the opinion of the virgins, a delay. How are the pleasant and speedy expectations of marriage then deceived!

Hosted by Google

them a copious supply of oil (which almost follows from ver. 9, where their vessels also have no more left); while the foolish, already carelessly slumbering, no longer observed the good example of the wise, so as to be reminded of their duty. Therefore the readiness of the wise virgins is reckoned to them as an entire *watching*, notwithstanding the intervening slumber; for a man watches as much as he can when he has made provision for the possibility of his sleeping.

He who will come as a thief, comes at the same time as the bridegroom; ever in the night, at an hour when one thinks not. But whence now is the *cry* of his coming (comp. in another reference, 1 Thess. iv. 16), since all are asleep? Christ here actually hints that, although the general predominating state may be called a sleeping, He will yet graciously see to there being individual *watchers* on the walls of Jerusalem (Is. lxii. 5–7), who sleep *not*. It will not suffice to understand merely "the Holy Ghost;" because He must still have human heralds. This voice says plainly, *The bridegroom!* and that with a *Behold!* before He actually *cometh*, ver. 10.[1] Upon this *awakening call* the virgins again all rise up, there is a great general commotion among all "believers;" they even *all* trim their lamps, every one as well as he can.[2] The foolish, therefore, begin again *to become wise;* they were never deficient in the knowledge how the bridegroom is to be received, and the will is present with them—ah, how gladly would they be in the same case with the others! But the cleaning of the wick alone[3] will not avail, if at the decisive hour there begins to be a want of oil.

Vers. 8, 9. How sad at *this* hour to hear, in common with the others, as a virgin called and come thus far to meet the bridegroom, that now the bridegroom comes—to arise with them in the first moment of joy, when every door flies open—to take the yet burning lamp in good confidence, to begin to trim it for the festal reception—and *now*, even now in the moment which is

[1] We have already before expressed our opinion as to how far Olshausen is justified in calling to mind here the θυρωρός, Mark xiii. 34.

[2] The rest of the world and pseudo-christendom sleep quietly on.

[3] Or, besides, "arranging the garlands around the lamps," as Braune ingeniously adds.

Hosted by Google

to bring the fruit and reward of all the previous waiting and preparing, suddenly to perceive with horror that the lamp *is gone out!* Yes, if the Lord would but come at once to fetch us, when our lamp is first lighted, when the first love burns most brightly and ardently! But He will delay, and then surprise us. Now, thou prayest fervently, O my soul, be not weary, so that He may find thee watching and praying. Now, the flame burns; but consider that the good oil also is thereby being consumed, and have a care for the supply, that thou mayest have when it is needed. What is necessary is not merely at the outset to love His appearing, and afterwards to be content; but to wait and hasten with all earnestness to meet His coming. The decisive moment at the last (ver. 8) makes the great want manifest, the ground of which was already present in the folly from the first. Then, indeed, in the extremity, one lays hold on his next neighbour, and entreats him: Help me in with you, give me somewhat of your excellent preparation! But, *then*, no soul can communicate to another; none can have more than it needs for itself, to stand with *its entire* preparation. "There might not be enough for us and you"—or μήποτε, אוּלַי, it may not be sufficient;—understand before, "We can give nothing!" The wise are at once wakened up, are again truly wise, so as, with good intention, and in true zeal, to avoid all delay.[1] They direct them rather to the *traders* or sellers of oil, if they yet may find time for this. Is this an idle feature in the picture, and without significance? Hardly so, and just because it comes thus strikingly into prominence. Is it a well-meant but *false* advice, which is here put by Christ into the mouth of the wise virgins?[2] This also contradicts our feeling;—still more, however, to suppose, that it was a *mockery* of the poor foolish ones from the mouth of their modest loving associates, as even Luther says: Thus must it happen, justi ridebunt in interitu impiorum—or more gently with Calvin:

[1] "Had the wise virgins watched"—says Meyer well—"they might perhaps have been able to give a supply to the others." Namely, in the time before, instead of sleeping; but then the foolish must likewise, in order to this, have been watchful and wise.

[2] "Why do they not cry to the Bridegroom? Why do they run to *men* for oil?" So preaches Luther on this, and compares Luke xvi. 24 the crying to Abraham, but he forgets that it is here not a folly of the foolish but a counsel of the wise.

Hosted by Google

Non admonitio est sed exprobratio. Fuit antehac emendi tempus, quod a vobis negligi non oportuit. This is, indeed, alas! implied, only that those who give the counsel do not precisely thus mean it. At all events that remains true which Calvin also goes on to say: prostabat enim tunc oleum venale; *i.e.*, there were and are actually *traders* from whom this oil may be had. According to Rev. iii. 18 we can buy pure gold, white raiment, eye-salve, all that we require for Christ, only from Christ Himself; the sellers here must therefore indeed be His servants, whom He has appointed for this, only not exactly as Olshausen strangely enough expresses it—"the holy Scripture and its authors." We say, instead of this: Prophets and Apostles, witnesses and stewards of God, in the most general sense. (Comp. Rev. xi. 4, according to Zech. iv. 11–14.) We understand our Lord as meaning, by this feature of the picture, these two things: first, for the time of preparation, to direct to the "hearing and learning and receiving, through the ordinary means and persons" (according to Zeller);[1] then, however, to give the warning that *at last* to take this course will be very uncertain, if not impossible. Just as before there were watchers, although all slept, so now there are sellers, although as a rule no one can any longer give to another.[2]

Vers. 10–12. Here there lie hid, in general, prophetic hints which the future alone will unseal. The time of the marriage is denoted Rev. xix. 6–9. The foolish virgins have become wise, and actually go thence to buy; the best and only thing they can do, certainly better than with lamp extinguished to go to meet the bridegroom. But it is too late; not an hour, not a minute does the coming one now wait for those who had had time enough for preparation. So the words appear to run. If,

[1] We are not inclined, however, to find in this feature of the parable an argument for a special, nay even a paid, office of teacher in the church (as Alford).

[2] But—buy in good time for another reason. Before the coming of the Lord "the right good lamp-oil becomes very rare, the illuminati have confiscated it for their phosphorus." Stillings Heimweh iv. 438. Similarly Zeller speaks of the *gas-lights* of illumination and enlightenment set up from beneath, which lead many to mistake the night for the clear day; persons *thus* misled, however, are outside of the parable.

Hosted by Google

however, we read quite exactly, it is only said, And they *that were ready* went in with him;—in like manner only, At last came also *the other* virgins;—they are not said to be five in number, nay the rejected ones are not even *now* any longer called foolish, because they went to buy oil. There remains, therefore, a slight, very concealed, hope that one, perhaps, of the foolish virgins had recovered in time what was neglected;[1] upon this, however, no one is to rely, for the coming too late after the door has been shut is fearful enough. This sentence is expressed in words which are meant to bring to mind the Sermon on the Mount, yet it is not the same. The saying *Lord, Lord,* of the virgins is not so bad as that which we find there; for here they entreat humbly, there they adjure in an insolent question. Also the answer *I know you not!* is evidently milder than *I never knew you!* which indeed cannot be said to the virgins who at one time were ready. Therefore also they are far from receiving the curse which follows afterwards at ver. 41; not even a sentence such as the servant ver. 30, or chap. xxiv. 51. They are left behind, and are come too late, only *for this time;* which must certainly be always a source of sorrow to *those* who already waited for the bridegroom. When Stilling says: "I think the bridegroom will let himself be entreated when once the sun shines over all hills,"—we agree with him so far as to think that a further hope as regards the *last* end must remain for awakened and pardoned ones, who are not entirely fallen away; but protest against the error which means still more than this, and which betrays itself behind "*all* hills." For, chap. xxv. 46 is the last decision, after which no sunbeam any longer remains behind the hill. We are also at one with Feldhoff[2] in this, that Luke xiii. 25–28 is something *different;* when the *householder* is arisen (not as Luke xii. 36) and *the evil-doers come not into the kingdom of God.* All these discourses of Christ, sounding so much alike that they insensibly

[1] One may certainly (as Zeller) understand this form of expression only to the effect that it is meant to indicate, how it was not their *wisdom* but their *readiness* that brought them in. This, however, is not enough, because in the entire passage wise and ready are reckoned the *same.*

[2] Evangelische Zeugnisse aus dem Wupperthale (Barmen 1832), in a sermon from which we have already quoted.

Hosted by Google

mix with each other, are yet characterised by well-weighed differences, which a true prophetic theology may forecast, and which the fulfilment will clearly demonstrate. Only we ought preliminarily to read and acknowledge so much, namely, that the coming of the Bridegroom, the Lord of the servants, is not yet the last advent of the Judge.

THIRD PARABLE: THE FAITHFUL SERVANTS.

(Matt. xxv. 14–30, [Luke xix. 12–27.])

We preachers, almost all of us, do not enough imitate in our office the highest wisdom of our Master; but are too indolent or too fastidious to learn from His Spirit the use of coelestium similitudines ex humanis, in order to our preaching by parable to the people. Many pay their tribute, indeed, to the recorded parables of the Master, but do not themselves venture a step farther on this way; many think they have nothing better to do with these parables than to distil them into a purely abstract essence, in order that they may become worthy of the pulpit. We ought, indeed, to *interpret* them for ourselves and others, with a distinct "that is" for the principal features in them—this our Master also teaches us; but *then*, it requires the experience obtained through His Spirit to show how parable and interpretation together open up a sphere of inexhaustible meaning, of never finished application. Such is the wondrous nature of the parable concerning the kingdom of heaven, which Christ has drawn forth into light from the recesses of nature, and the secrets of human life, precisely where the common eye sees only what is vulgar and common-place.

What is more common-place than the trafficking and acquiring gain in human commerce, corresponding to the sowing and reaping in nature (see here ver. 24), the making money, which is to so many the sole impelling principle of life? Christ does not shrink from the contamination which avarice, selfishness, and sin had, even at that time, made to cleave to this; He is not thereby deterred, but rather induced, to place in opposition to this

Hosted by Google

earthly prudence and faithfulness His heavenly counsel, Γίνεσθε καλοὶ τραπεζῖται. Already in Luke xix. He had spoken a similar parable; but so far are we from the opinion that Christ can have spoken this only once, either here or there, that we rather think He had already spoken before, in Luke xix. 12, 13, the saying which He here repeats shortly before His departure. As in that place the parable is strictly connected with the context, ver. 11 and ver. 28, so here it stands in the same close connection, in order to explain the prophetical εὐθέως, chap. xxiv. 29, by a subsequent μετὰ χρόνον πολύν (ver. 19). Those features which are added in the first representation by St Luke, —in particular the side glance, there interwoven and here omitted, at the judgment on the citizens who would not have Him to reign over them,—we shall leave to our interpretation of that Evangelist. At present we only consider what, as an explanatory parallel, immediately belongs to the second representation.

Vers. 14, 15. There is something wanting here to correspond to the ὥσπερ; and many, according to chap. xxiv. 37, would supply οὕτως ἔσται ἡ παρουσία τοῦ υἱοῦ τοῦ ἀνθρώπου;—but this goes too far back. The English Bible more correctly puts: "*For the kingdom of heaven* is as a man, etc.," for the γάρ points first of all to ver. 1, and, by the connecting link in ver. 13, places the faithful servants immediately parallel to the wise virgins. Therefore it is to be read thus: For the kingdom of heaven is *then further*—to represent it by another figure —like unto the servants of a lord, with whom it happened thus. *These* servants are, therefore, now no longer chiefly such as are placed over churches, as in chap. xxiv. 45; but actually every individual to whom, on his part, something is entrusted and committed, out of the gift and grace of Christ. These are *His* goods, the spiritual gifts and possessions of grace purchased by Him for His people, and left behind at His departure. They are *not* the earthly possessions of the householder, Luke xvi. 1, which indeed also require faithful management (and in so far are reckoned also to them as servants); nor are they *yet* the πάντα τὰ ὑπάρχοντα, already spoken of in chap. xxiv. 47, but the small first-fruits of these, as a test of faithfulness, in order to the recompense of the whole. It is *His* property, legitimately acquired

Hosted by Google

and only distributed by Him; and the servants, whom He calls with the evangelical calling into His kingdom and its service, are thereby already presupposed to be *His own* servants, *i.e.*, who have become His in faith (in contradistinction to the citizens in St Luke who *would not*). The *departure* also of the Saviour, after His first manifestation, entirely corresponds to the departure of God at the beginning of the old covenant, chap. xxi. 33; for, the "Divine visitation, after it has organised a new plan of life, lent out new capital, is always followed by an ἀποδημεῖν, in order to a trial how men will make use of it —the instructive revelation is followed by a quite as instructive silence.[1] This is the *delivering* of the goods of the lord to the free disposal of His servants (although, of course, they are not entirely left to themselves); because He will one day have in His kingdom only such as are free, and have become worthy. As the servants have become His servants through grace, He has thus a further right to require faithful and active service from them; for it is only His capital that can and is to bear interest in their hands. He calls them *all* to this work: τοὺς ἰδίους δούλους is here equivalent to the *number ten* in St Luke (as in the virgins). There is no one left out who receives nothing; for in that case the right to the servants would be taken from Him. When prominence is given to the *difference* in the gift by five, two, and one, this is in perfect harmony with the former equality of the ten pounds for the ten servants; they are only two sides of the same thing. In relation to, and comparison with, others, each one receives a special measure of the gift of Christ, of the calling as an office-bearer or a private member to a greater or less measure of active work for the kingdom; but every one, considered by himself, receives equally the same, just as one who has only half the strength of another bears as much, in his half-burden, as that other with his double strength and his double load. This *equal* distribution, which is removed from all caprice, and is rather righteous in the seeming difference, is evidently denoted in the clause which is added, and which points deep into the secrets of the Divine dispensation, ἑκάστῳ κατὰ τὴν ἰδίαν δύναμιν; where the ἰδίαν, by way of gracious acknowledgment, stands opposed to the foregoing ἰδίους, in order to

[1] Beck, Christliche Lehrwissenschaft i. 345.

Hosted by Google

teach that this Lord, who willingly gives to each one as much as he can receive, not merely knows His servants, but also certainly assigns to them neither too much nor too little.

Is there then a co-operating *ability* of nature in the work of grace; is not everything only of the ability which God imparts? Thus asks anxiously the man who is zealous for the glory of Divine grace;[1] but his mind ought to be set at rest by remembering (as Pelagius himself knew better than the Pelagians), that the natural power and capacity here presupposed in the servants, and brought with them to the service of their Lord, is already a first gift of grace from the Creator, and no merit. For no one has created and made himself such as he is. But that the χαρίσματα are, as a rule (perhaps actually in every case, even where it appears to be otherwise), exactly and justly proportioned to the natural capacity, to the individuality and character of each person; that, if not *every* gift, entirely in equal degree and without exception, yet generally the gift "is transmuted from a spiritual talent of nature into a spiritual talent of the kingdom" (according to Lange's expression);— is the great truth which our Lord here utters, not more and not less.[2]

Vers. 16–18. But now, alas, the freedom of man, in faithfulness or unfaithfulness, brings yet another difference, which is willed neither by the Creator nor by the restoring Redeemer. *Occupy till I come!* This word, which was before distinctly expressed in Luke xix. 13, although not expressed here, was as evidently implied in the παρέδωκεν, as, in chap. xxi. 33, it was implied in the ἐξέδοτο that the householder will have fruit from his vineyard. The ἐργάζεσθαι here used signifies also in Greek *negotiari*, πραγματεύεσθαι; yet it is selected on purpose, as a more general expression, to indicate the activity and labour belonging thereto. In proportion to the gift received stands

[1] And to save his theology, has recourse to an exegetical artifice, as Wesley who refers the δύναμις (against the clause ἑκάστῳ) to the Lord: "according to *His own* mighty power."

[2] To infer, with Braune, that the talents are therefore not inward gifts, but "spheres of labour" of different extent, is certainly false, and can be carried out only very artificially. The sphere of labour is indeed to be considered as belonging thereto; but in itself is no gift, no intrusted possession.

Hosted by Google

also the measure of profit acquired; this is the rule and principle of judgment before the righteous Lord, beyond which He asks and expects nothing (Luke xii. 48). Therefore the parable here abides by this; while before, the different degrees of faithfulness were denoted, according to which the same pound gained in the one case ten, in the other five pounds. In this, however, was denoted not *merely* the faithfulness, but the different success lying in the outward circumstances. Ἐποίησε equivalent to ἐκέρδησε—not merely a Latinism, pecuniam *conficere*, as Erasmus here puts it, but, in perfect conformity with the Greek language, a word taken from the analogy of fruit-bearing with every other produce. We are of course not at liberty to pursue further into specialities the similitude of trading with, and profitably investing, a capital of money, as will appear from ver. 27. The two faithful servants are, notwithstanding their different capital and interest, equally faithful; they both *double* what they have received, which is meant to be denoted, by ὡσαύτως καί and καὶ αὐτός, as emphatically as possible for him who has less, so that no one may hold him in less esteem on that account. How are our hasty judgments (1 Cor. iv. 2, 5) here rebuked, when we measure the fruit, without knowing how much God has sown in nature and grace! He, however, who brings no fruit at all, is certainly to be found fault with and warned. If the one talent gains only one more, the Lord will be alike satisfied with it; but He will have His own again with interest, it was for this He gave it. All the intermediate cases in which five talents received gain only two, on the contrary, two gain five, or perhaps even one five, while five bring nothing at all—these are not in any way denied by the parable, which only selects from amongst them the examples most significant for the present purpose. Lord, Thou hast given me *nothing at all*—this can no one say to Him, who yet claims to belong to His servants. But so *little*, that it was not worth the trouble to attempt anything with it, so that Thou canst only ask back that is Thine—this is, alas! that frequent excuse of indolence which is meant to be refuted by the example here selected for the purpose.

This *evil* servant is again a counterpart to that foregoing one: *there* it was positive evil-doing; *here* only an indolent not-doing, which is rather parallel to the idleness and carelessness of the

Hosted by Google

virgins. Yet there is also implied in this,—and it was not otherwise possible, seeing that the gift of grace was there,—a positive spoiling and throwing away of that gift, by which feature the parable of the virgins is supplemented. It would be treating this servant too harshly to regard him as one who had entirely fallen away; this he is not, so long as he still possesses the talent. But it is dealing too favourably with him, and giving more credit to his own false word, ver. 25, than the Searcher of hearts, who does not give credit to it (but, false as it is, applies it in a better sense), when he is described merely as a *timid* character, who had avoided entering into business with a view to gain, who, in false humility, had trusted himself too little. The judgment passed upon him by the Lord, ver. 26, gives him his true distinctive name, which comprehends all his guilt, Thou *slothful* servant! It is, indeed, implied in this that the slothful one shuns exertion (Prov. xxii. 13, xx. 4)—but the spiritually slothful needs labour enough safely to keep, as he thinks, the talent which admonishes to activity. He imagines and persuades himself that he will at least secure it against loss and theft; but in reality he *hides* it from his own eyes, when he puts it into the earth, and thereby himself commits a theft on *his Lord's* money, the increase of which he owed as an obligation to his Master. The ἀπελθών, which stands opposed to the πορευθείς, still more the *burying* of the talent, costs him as much trouble, if not more;[1] since there is required for this an evil, sullen, labour to keep himself in idleness, in opposition to the impulse of the Spirit. The Deutsche Theologie calls this "hoarding up the merit of Christ"—and in those who do so the grace of God has been received in vain, 1 Cor. xv. 10. The burying *in the earth*, whereby Chrysostom too fancifully understands the heart, which is earth and ashes, is first of all a proverbial expression in the parable (according to Sir. xxix. 13, xx. 30, as we also find the expression *defosso auro incubare)*;—then it may also denote the sinking of the idle one into an earthly mind and course of conduct. As in St Luke, the σουδάριον at all events might slightly indicate (what Gossner and Richter,

[1] Thus wrote Hamann to Lindner: "Save yourselves the trouble of digging, and the expense of a napkin—betake yourselves to the bank of exchange, where we may invest and exchange our talent."

Hosted by Google

following the Berlenburger Bible, remark), that, shunning the sweat of labour, he knew of no other and better use to make of his napkin.[1]

Vers. 19–23. As surely as the prophetic glance of Christ, immediately after this parable, stretches far beyond to the last day properly speaking, ver. 31, so surely in these intervening parables, from the χρονίζειν, chap. xxiv. 48 onwards, does it extend at least to a coming which reaches far beyond the destruction of Jerusalem; and it is now no longer a "coming again at the time of the Apostles" that is spoken of, although the Apostles are included as the first representatives of His gifted servants. Μετὰ χρόνον πολύν, as already said, is an evident explanation of that first prophetical εὐθέως. The coming one remains the Lord of all *these servants*, of the unfaithful as well as the faithful; and in the case of the latter will show Himself as Lord in the reckoning. What is said by the servants to the Lord, although here figuratively represented, will yet be found, when they appear and are made manifest, to correspond to the thoughts of their heart. The good servants who (as also afterwards before the King's throne) first receive their judgment and commendation, can present themselves before their Lord with a frank and joyous confidence: *See*—not merely ἰδού but ἴδε. They have in His presence a clear consciousness of the measure of what was received at first, and what was further gained, of the difference and relation between the two. I have *therewith* gained other five talents! thus does Luther render it according to the parallel in St Luke, where the faithful servants humbly ascribe the gain to the gift of Christ: Thy pound has gained or borne ten, five pounds. (As 1 Cor. xv. 10; not I but the grace of God.) Yet ἐπ' αὐτοῖς here signifies in the first place not *per ea*, as Erasmus, but *in addition to them*, as increase and produce; Vulg. more correctly: *superlucratus sum*—comp. in St Luke προσειργάσατο. The same sense, however, lies indeed already in the grateful acknowledgment: Thou deliveredst unto me five, two talents, *i.e.*, this *Thy capital* has thus increased in my hand and management. The faithful one now receives a gracious commendation, inasmuch as the

[1] Although we shall not contradict any one who might think such adherence to the etymology too artificial in regard to a word that has been translated into Greek.

Hosted by Google

Lord kindly reckons again to him as merit, what the servant ascribed only to the gift of his Lord: this is precisely what is just and right in the account and reckoning between God and men. With a foregoing Εὖ (Well done!) breaking forth from the heart of the satisfied, nay, delighted Lord, the servant receives the honourable name of a *good* and faithful servant; now even more fully than chap. xxiv. 45, 48.[1] Before this rich Lord even five talents (at that time a large sum) are held but *little*, in proportion to the yet remaining abundance of *all* his goods. (In St Luke ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ; because the capital of each one was denoted as a small tithe, small indeed, yet not to be despised when with diligence it is profitably employed.) He is now set over *many things* by way of recompense: this is not quite the same with that setting over *all* his goods in which, at chap. xxiv. 47, there was already an anticipation of the last end; for the *cities*, which correspond to it in St Luke, are still more or less according to the gain acquired, they lie in the same country and kingdom as the αἰώνιαι σκηναί (Luke xvi. 9.) It is a continued and exalted activity, a dominion fraught with blessing in the Millennial kingdom, that is here spoken of; but it is another kind of labour and exertion from that hitherto, namely a *joy*. And it is the *joy of the Lord, i.e.*, not merely the joy "prepared, destined for thee by the Lord"—but precisely His joy, that which He first achieved for Himself (Heb. xii. 2), which consists chiefly in the joy in His redeemed and faithful ones, His delight to communicate to them all that Himself has, nay, at last to adjudge to *them* also all His grace which others have despised. The faithful servant enters into the fellowship of the joy of His Lord (comp. John xv. 11). This Lord has distributed the talents, not truly for the sake of the profit and gain, but to try His servants, and that He might make blessed those who are approved; just as in chap. 20 He hired the labourers in order to bestow upon them the reward of their labour. Therefore also do those who were differently endowed,

[1] Meyer, indeed, would construe this εὖ adverbially with the ἦς πιστός; but this sounds strange. It is certainly an interjection of the delighted and warmly commending Lord—in one little word of His mouth the highest reward! Therefore as elsewhere εὖγε, so also μαλ' εὖ and simple εὖ thus occurs.

Hosted by Google

having shown a like faithfulness, receive the same commendation; not, Thou hast *gained* much! but, Thou hast been *faithful* over little![1] The detailed repetition of the same colloquy is meant finally to show that it will not be tedious to the Lord in His joy to express in full to each one His special commendation; and that to receive *this* from such lips will be a greater joy to every good servant than all other power and honour.

Vers. 24, 25. The slothful servant *must* also at last *come forward*, but he has no joyous ἴδε for the Lord; before venturing to speak that word in quite another sense, he prefaces it by some very ill-sounding expressions as a vain *excuse*. What thoughts of his heart now become manifest, so that he must represent himself in sad truth, although in doing so he himself yet means to lie! They are the equally insolent and pusillanimous, the self-contradictory and judging thoughts of every natural conscience before God; for so far alas has this servant who had once also received the gift of grace, sunk back through the non-use of that gift. Thou *art* a hard and severe master—(Luke αὐστηρός)—this I knew!—More sharply, ἔγνων σε; thus, I *knew* thee! But why not more: I *know* it, I know thee? Because he will excuse his *former* conduct, but not because the friendly judgments which preceded had made him wiser: for he was not yet present when these were pronounced; therefore he still presumes to speak of the good Lord, contrary to the proof which had just been delivered, as of one who unjustly exacts more than can be yielded, and he expresses this in the rudest manner: Who *reaps, will* reap where he has not sowed, and gather where he has scattered nothing.[2] Thereby must the evil servant bear testimony with his own mouth to the innermost truth, and the most perfect right, according to which the Lord requires *fruit* or produce from what he sows or gives—in which idea this *last* parable of Jesus remarkably harmonises with the first, Matt. xiii. 3–9. That God demands fruits and works—that He will reap—is the truth which remains in the speech of this evil servant; but that He makes His demands beyond the

[1] "Not good and *successful* servant, but good and *faithful*," as a missionary speaker in London once expressed it.

[2] We do not think that διασκορπίζειν here is to *winnow*, but, comparing with Luke, take it as simply synonymous: to *scatter* seed.

Hosted by Google

capacity of sinful man, without first imparting grace—this is the lie with which certainly the slothful man strives, but in vain, continually to deceive himself. "One cannot become so holy as God requires, it is in vain for one to attempt to satisfy His strictness"—this he has said to himself long before, until he comes into disgrace when at last he *must* say it also before the face of the good and gracious Lord. I was *afraid*—this excuse is *half* true, since Adam (Gen. iii. 10) spake this word for the first time before the Creator; for, the fear of the evil conscience is actually the reason of the slothfulness in what is good, just as the joyful confidence in grace is the ground of all sanctification. Yet this excuse is, at the same time, half false, and already a self-judgment out of his own mouth. For (as Lisco very aptly observes), the pretended *fear* and this *impudent* speech, as if the Lord were unjust, agree but ill together; a true, and thoroughly honest, fear of the strict reckoning would not have remained idle, as we shall immediately perceive. The servant must also himself at last entirely refute his own words, inasmuch as the talent which had been delivered also to him comes to light. *Lo*, there hast thou, or thou hast *that is thine!* A counterpart to the word of the householder, chap. xx. 14, which has almost no other sense than the timorously insolent, confused application: I have stolen nothing from it, only be satisfied with it—thou wouldst certainly rather not have given me it, take it now, and let me have nothing further to do with what is thine! In fact this *evil* servant has never actually appropriated to himself the gift of grace; he has, as much as in him lay, thrust it from him, through non-use; and yet he has received it, and this is the ground of his sentence. (In his case it is εἰληφώς, with emphasis upon the past; in that of the others it is λαβών, of the continued taking and keeping.)

Vers. 26, 27. He has judged himself, as is said in Luke xix. Thou *evil* and *slothful* servant![1] That is the true reason of thy conduct, even if with greatest mildness I allow to be true what thou sayest and take thee at thy word—more mildly I cannot judge thee! Even the fear of my hardness should at least have

[1] Πονηρὲ καὶ ὀκνηρέ—an accidental assonance from which Schleiermacher inferred that the discourse was spoken originally in Greek, probably in Galilee. One may thus be over-fine.

Hosted by Google

had some effect, if thou hadst been thoroughly in earnest. The Lord convicts him of a complete contradiction in the speech which mixes truth with falsehood; and forcibly takes away from him the false *Ergo*. *Knewest* thou actually that I would reap where I have *not* sowed? Then *must* thou have made *what* I have sowed in thee at least as fruitful as possible! Have I sowed nothing in thee? Is the talent which thou thyself now producest to me nothing? (Even five talents were *little* before; but a single talent is *much* when viewed as the means of obtaining a like reward by the faithful employment of it.) Yea, thou shouldst rather in thy fear have been more zealous than the others; or—if I would exact even the smallest thing—thou shouldest at least have given what was entrusted to thee to the exchangers, if thou thyself hadst no active hand and inclination to employ it! This alone appears to us the simple sense of such a direction: thou hadst at all events open and easy *opportunity* to do *something* with it, instead of burying it. For the rest, we are not at liberty to ask *here* who are the exchangers; they belong to the metaphor of *doing business* with *money*, and Olshausen seems to us to go too far, when he speaks of "more timid natures, who are not fitted for independent labour, joining themselves to stronger persons." This servant is by no means merely a timid person; besides, to make a profitable use of grace by means of others, without one's own labour, is in itself an impossible representation. The Lord therefore cannot mean it thus; for He sanctions and acknowledges the putting of the talent into the public bank (joining societies, and such like corresponding to the figure) only when in this there has been *faithfulness and activity on one's own part*. *This* He will, and must, require; and it is only as a proof of this that He requires the usury, τόκος (what the capital has produced or borne in interest), *without* which he does not take back *his own* when offered to him. If he speaks thus to the servant who has remained idle half in fear, half in presumption—what will he say to those whose excuse might run thus, I knew that thou art a *compassionate*, most indulgent and kind man! Fundamentally only the same thing, with a different turn: Didst thou really know this, then my great love must have awakened reciprocal love in thy heart, and therefore impelled

Hosted by Google

thee to a zealous gratitude and faithfulness, nothing of which I find in thee!

Vers. 28–30. Behold how the judging Lord comes as a *thief*, as a *taker away*,—not merely upon those who dwell on the earth in their houses built of sand, to teach them by experience, what they would not believe, that all their possessions are empty and transient—but also upon the unfaithful ones in His kingdom; the foolish virgins, however, less than the wicked servants. From those virgins who were *left* outside the door nothing was taken; for their lamps were burning again, when they knocked too late. They have therefore a stronger hope as regards the final end, if in the interval they shall have thoroughly made amends for their present carelessness; but the *unprofitable* servant who is of no use to the Lord in His kingdom, just as the one before who beat his fellow-servants and rioted, just as he who was found without the garment, is at once cast into outer darkness, while the diligent ones enter into the bright marriage-room and mansion of joy. Into this prison of pain he cannot, of course, take with him his Lord's talent of grace, so long despised by him, laid aside as *useless*, only thus hardly kept for the reckoning; it is *taken* from him, and, notwithstanding the objection against this startling command of the Lord, even by those who are to execute it (Luke xix. 25), given to him who already has most. Here, in the first place, we see again that the Lord desired the gain, not for His own reaping or gathering; that in so far also the diligent servants are in nothing profitable to *Him*, in that other sense of the word in Luke xvii. 10; Job. xxii. 2, 3. Then there appears here, again at the end of the parables, the great fundamental principle of God's kingdom and house, which, in Matt. xiii. 12, marked their beginning;[1] this is of great significance, and indicates that as well the first as the last giving and taking on the part of the Lord proceeds according to the same rule. In Matt. chap. xiii., we reserved for this place the full development of this saying of the highest justice, which sounds contradictory and unjust; but there is properly nothing now to be explained; as the entire parable has already furnished

[1] Again a proof that St Matthew has not merely transposed here what was said at an earlier period.

Hosted by Google

the explanation. V. Meyer's note at that place, "*Whosoever hath*, in which everything depends only on the desiring to have, not despising and well using"—is, indeed, true as regards the sense; the expression, however, does not quite satisfy us, and we would rather denote the three decisive ideas which it implies thus: the *being able to receive*, *holding fast*, and *using well*. The first giving, distributing and sowing of the Lord is done, it is true, in the way of a general offer, but can only become actual *giving*, when it meets a receiving in the hearts of men, or the field: this is the first having on our side, the capacity to receive in faith. The unbelief of the unsusceptible, is indeed—inasmuch as the Lord still offers—a *not willing* (that this one should reign over us, should give his gifts to us!), but precisely therein the *not being able*, which the gift of grace removes. Only the servants who had come when the Lord called: Come unto Me, whosoever will belong to Me, and serve Me! who, therefore, had already an obedience of faith, an open and outstretched hand for the gift, received then something for further management. Thus the slothful servant was at the first also one who *had;* although perhaps that he received so little may have lain in his inferior δύναμις (with a new sense of that first word which, however, is not the sole sense for all cases). Now, all depended on the not despising, or *holding fast* and preserving of what had been received. Was the talent not well enough kept in the hole or in the napkin? No, the slothful servant *despised* it as "his Lord's money," with which nothing was further to be done, although he had received it he had yet not truly *taken* it, and appropriated it to himself; therefore the sentence at last, Take it again from him! only corresponds to the evil word of his own mouth, Thou hast that is thine! In a certain sense, indeed, he had it up to this time; yet this having was no true preserving or keeping, he had only hoarded up the seed dry, instead of letting it bear fruit. Therefore this is finally decisive: Whosoever will rightly hold fast the gifts of the Lord must *use* them, with diligence and labour, in order to their increase; for this they are, according to their nature, given: keeping and profitably employing are one and the same thing. The works are the nourishment of the faith, the diligence of faithful use is the oil for the burning lamp; doing nothing in the strength of

Hosted by Google

grace, and bearing no fruit from its seed, is enough for the judgment which again takes away that which one seemed to have, but in reality had not. Observe here an important limitation of the apostolical saying in Rom. xi. 29, so often one-sidedly misunderstood; for it is clear as the sun that the Lord again takes what He has given, when the receiver did not rightly take hold of and use it. Preliminary judgments according to this principle manifoldly occur even now, so that in the one, the grace which was not carried into work is lost, lost to him even out of the whole in which he had secreted it, as he will find when he feels inclined again to look after it; on the other hand, the grace which has departed from others is, as it were, manifestly given to him who is faithful. How the *final* state of the case will be, however, in regard to all these things and relations—this only the fulfilment of the prophetic parable and saying will make quite clear; when the Son of Man shall come in His kingdom, to strip many who are accounted children of the light, of the last glimmer which was still in their possession unused, and to turn them quite naked into outer darkness.[1] "How wretched, how incapable, how dark, how hateful such a man will be, no one can now conceive; because there lives no man upon earth from whom his pound is taken, let him be as bad as he will:"—this remark of Roos sounds strange, but it is true when we understand it of the natural gift, which is still always present. See what has been already said on Matthew xiii. 12.

LAST ADVENT: GENERAL AND FINAL JUDGMENT.

(Matt. xxv. 31–46.)

Could Christ have spoken of His coming three times in succession, and that so differently in each instance, if an actually different fulfilment did not correspond to each of His words?

[1] This idea belongs here properly to the whole; and has not (according to Neander) been unsuitably brought over from Luke into Matthew.

Hosted by Google

First of all, a coming, not personally, but as the lightning, a manifestation in order to judgment, by the eagles gathered to the carcass, while His people have *fled;* then a *visibly* personal coming, already with great power and glory, in order to a separating judgment upon *His called* ones, when the elect are gathered together, and enter into the kingdom; now again a ὅταν δέ (this δέ is not to be overlooked!) and a τότε, certainly still a *different* one from that at ver. 1, and a last separation of all who are not yet separated, in which His own people appear with Him as already justified and not coming into judgment. Comp. 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, with 2 Thess. i. 7–10; and mark these two things, a promiscuous mingling as regards detail, and yet a perceptible distinction between an *intermediate* and *last* coming of the Lord.—Is then Christ's own prophecy here of the last coming also a *parable,* like the three that precede? Strangely enough, commentators, in other respects intelligent, nay, acute (even Lange), speak of it as such: as if the single expression, "*the King,*" justified this, while everything else contradicts it! *The Son of Man* stands quite properly and expressly in the foreground; the angels, the nations, the kingdom, the fire, the devil —all these are not parabolical, and certainly also not the *throne* of glory, which will be incomparably more real and unfigurative than any that has ever hitherto stood upon earth as a prophetic figure of it. The single parabolical feature in ver. 33, which is introduced by a ὥσπερ, ver. 32 (it is surely not usual to insert in this way one parable into another), is carried out only for a moment, and nothing further is said of speaking sheep and goats, as was natural. Finally, the speaking of those who stand on the right hand and on the left, is easily understood; just as many things which are not to be taken exactly literally, yet quite as little to be taken parabolically. Therefore, "nunc plane et sine figuris." So *plane,* indeed, as that a certain echo of the condescendingly parabolic *tone* is not to be mistaken, even at the conclusion; so that the world-Judge speaks simply also for children concerning the end just as Moses did of the creation, so that the prophetic mysteries are covered as with a slight veil; but yet, along with this, there are many things, the greatest and most decisive that could be spoken of beforehand to the sons of men by the Son of Man, here openly declared with a calm clearness and

Hosted by Google

dignity, which we cannot enough admire when we think that He spake all this a day or two before His suffering! Here the *condescendingly* sublime poetry of the New Testament, in contrast with the prophetical *rhetorical flights* of the Old Testament, appears in its most striking form.

Vers. 31–33. *His glory*, twice with highest emphasis: this is more than chap. xxiv. 30; for here it is the entire glory of the King upon the throne, of which Rev. xx. 11 speaks. *Then*, and not till then, will He thus sit and judge as Judge of all the world; as, since Gen. xviii. 25, nay, since Enoch, such a last general day of judgment had been announced and expected. The ἅγιοι before the ἄγγελοι is certainly to be cancelled; yet, as an early apposition (which originally meant others in addition to the angels, until the two words afterwards came together), it is a hint at what is evidently presupposed in ver. 40, namely, that the saints, already gathered around Him, now encompass the throne of the King with the angels—already belong to His glory. Rev. xix. 14, 8; Jude ver. 14; Zech. xiv. 5 (which also partly fulfils itself already at the middle Advent). *All* the angels, *all* the brethren of the first-born of the kings of the earth (Ps. lxxxix. 28; Rev. i. 5, 6), *all* nations, *i.e.*, all men, living and dead (Acts x. 42; Rev. xx. 12, 13)—What a scene! First gathered—presented in the body before His throne at His almighty call (John v. 28, 29); then all that till now was not yet separated, although already different, is *separated* with a final definitive separation and decision! While, since chap. xxiv. 31, the fate of the others remained as yet in a certain obscurity, *all nations* are now evidently placed in antithesis to the elect of His kingdom, to those who were called as virgins or servants, and even already separated: in consequence of mistaking this circumstance, this last judgment was for a long time not rightly understood. *Then* comes the recompense to *every one*, κατὰ τὴν πρᾶξιν, chap. xvi. 27; Rev. xx. 13. There appear at last also before Him those who had *hitherto* been led indirectly by latent unconscious grace without the knowledge of His person; whose *Shepherd* this King alone not the less was and is. Those who are now accepted of Him were already His *sheep*, as in John x. 16; and He Himself personally fulfils in them the word elsewhere committed to His messengers, Behold here is your King, behold

Hosted by Google

here am I! The Son of Man sits upon the throne, again the King is the Shepherd, and easily and safely, as a shepherd upon earth, does He seek out *His flock* for His kingdom, separates the sheep from the goats, according to the prophetical word (Ezek. xxxiv. 17), which at that time did not yet extend so *far*. The sheep are the tractable ones, who were obedient also only to the indirect, concealed, call of grace, to the eternal mercy which taught them mercy; the *goats* are the refractory, proud, injurious, with allusion to the prophetical usage, as Is. xiv. 9, and elsewhere. But *not* also, stinking, wanton, etc., as even V. Meyer would unwarrantably carry out the figure.[1]

Vers. 34–36. As in the parable of the servants, as already in the Sermon on the Mount, chap. vii. 22, so here Christ does *not* speak of *all* who are judged in detail, according to the condition and desert of each; but "adduces a test," brings forward two extreme classes, under which all must range themselves, on the right hand or the left: this also is to be well observed! Here for the *first time*, Christ designates Himself, not parabolically but quite properly, *King*, as afterwards only again before Pilate. The *King* of all nations now opens *the kingdom* which *each one* along with the others, and yet entirely for himself, now inherits. His "*Come!*" is addressed now for the first time also to those who have not openly had, or fully accepted the preaching and invitation, chap. xi. 28; but yet have become equally with the others, and now completely, the blessed of *His Father*. For, in His Father's name and authority, He has led and prepared them by His Spirit; and now also the judgment is committed unto Him by the Father. (John v. 22–27.) They are already saved from the curse of sin, blessed of the Lord (Gen. xxvi. 29; Ps. xxxvii. 22, cxv. 15; Is. lxv. 23); and this is now made gloriously manifest. For them also is the kingdom prepared from the *foundation of the world*, which, however, here equivalent to πρὸ καταβολῆς, John xvii. 24; 1 Pet. i. 20, designedly goes back only to the creation of the human race. It is now not merely the kingdom of the Son of Man, in which were as yet tares and offence,

[1] Sepp mentions the he-goat of the great day of atonement as the antithesis to the Paschal lamb, and further notices the Jewish usage, according to which all Gojim, as children of Edom or Seir (the hairy one), were called goats of the desert, but Jacob the lamb.

Hosted by Google

but the kingdom of the Father, at the same time, however, as the completed, manifested, kingdom of Christ, comp. Matt. xiii. 41, 43.[1] The being *blessed*, as also the *inheriting*, excludes all merit, apart from the gift and grace of the Father; the *for* which follows in connection with the works of mercy, is therefore to be understood accordingly, as an acknowledging manifestation by their acts of the worthiness wrought in them. *The King* addresses, however, a strange word to them, which they, of course, are not able at once to apprehend: *I* was the hungry, thirsty, homeless, naked, sick, imprisoned one, to whom ye have shown kindness.[2]

Vers. 37–40. The *righteous*, now declared to be such by the gracious judgment of the King, actually do not know that they have done such acts of kindness to Him; and every interpretation which perverts and misconstrues this their simple confession is false, and does not yet know who these favoured righteous ones are. Their humble reply is truly no mere empty phrase of modesty, which would be very unseasonable on such an occasion, before this throne; it is also no *forgetfulness* of their good works, such as is spoken of at chap. vi. 3,[3] but is plainly antithetical to the distinct consciousness of grace received and profited by which the ἴδε of the faithful servants, vers. 20–22, expressed. It is plain from this ἴδε that the disciples of Christ must then know what He means to say to them. Such are evidently not the persons here meant; *these* righteous ones are clearly distinguished at ver. 40 from "His brethren;" and that not merely "as the bridesmaids from the bride, the servants from the domestics!"

[1] As at Ephes. v. 5, see my interpretation of this Epistle.

[2] First, nourishment, *i.e.*, *meat* and *drink;* then covering, *i.e.*, *lodging* (συνάγειν, אסף, *hospitia excipere*) and *clothing;* lastly life, *i.e.*, *health* and *freedom.* Comp. passages such as Job xxii. 6, 7; Is. lviii. 7; Ezek. xviii. 7; Tob. i. 20; Sir. vii. 34; Jam. i. 27, ii. 15, 16. In ancient times, especially in the East, persons in prison might for the most part be visited; it was no strictly solitary confinement. For the rest, the Catholic Church should not have presumed to increase these *six* works of bodily mercy (which is also a complete number) to the number seven, by adding the apocryphal one of "burying the dead."

[3] Although even Lange abides by this: These merciful ones are also humble, they do not remember that they had acted as such angels of mercy upon earth!

Hosted by Google

The just made perfect, and the church of the first-born, Heb. xii. 23, are now already around Him in glory; they come no more into this judgment (John v. 24; 1 Cor. xi. 31), but now judge the world with Him (1 Cor. vi. 2), inasmuch as the conduct towards them as towards their Lord is what decides; but they had already before been presented at an intermediate judgment (Rom. xiv. 10), and now receive on this great day their complete crown (2 Tim. iv. 8).[1] They were once upon earth for the most part poor, wandering, and indigent; *there were some of them* to be found among all nations, and in them the great King, who actually was and lived in them, went begging, so to speak, incognito, in order to try the rest of men, for the judgment.[2] Therefore, that the righteous, who are here accepted, had done their good works for the sake of Christ, to serve Him, —and thus the works were named only as the evidence and effect of faith in *His person* (to speak with our narrow theology) —so much does this want of being true, that they actually do not know this, that their ignorance can only express itself in the question, When saw we *Thee?* For, that they have done good to *others*, who were in need, they know well. We find fault, therefore, with Krummacher's interpretation of this text in his Bremer Sermon.[3] It is the false interpretation which has been current so long, and which rests on the erroneous opinion, still pretty general among believers, that Christ here announces a general judgment upon Christians and heathen; contrary to the express statement at ver. 32. So much remains true, that certainly here also, the works are only valuable and decisive as the expression of the inward character and state of the heart; moreover, that a knowledge of the name of Jesus is presupposed in the righteous, as in chap. x. 42, xviii. 5; for

[1] We enter our protest here against the entire import of the remarkable essay in Tholuck's Litt. Anz. 1848, Nos. 38, 39 (although it professes to connect itself with our expression); and must emphatically reject all mere Jewishly parabolical speaking concerning the *last* judgment.

[2] He speaks here certainly only of His *brethren*, not in anywise of men in general, in so far as there yet lives something of Him in every man, as Ullmann (Stud. u. Kritik. 1847. p. 164) very doubtfully, at all events in an exegetical point of view wrongly, maintains.

[3] *I, My, to Me, Me*, these are the words upon which the emphasis rests here. *Jesus was the life of these people*, on His account they did this or that, etc.

Hosted by Google

until the Gospel has been everywhere preached there is no last judgment. So much is true; not, however, that (according to Neander) a general confession of faith in Christ by all men could here be taken for granted, which would contradict all prophetical theology. The speakers here exemplify the lowest class of those who stand as righteous before the judgment-seat, such as are not yet come to full decision, and yet are prepared for this, to whose *humility* the others (although with more distinct consciousness) willingly and becomingly join themselves; of these, however, actually holds true what V. Meyer's note says, as indicating the only right interpretation, "Wherever there exists a preponderating love to mankind, there is grace yet possible." We say, in addition: There *already was* the preparing, blessing grace, the love of the Father, out of which the love that covers a multitude of sins (1 Pet. iv. 8) has proceeded; the mercy of the not personally known Shepherd and King, which alone could make them merciful (Matt. v. 7); the faith that sanctifies and saves; the faithfulness which is tractable to the leading of God! Again, however, not merely as Braune speaks of the "Christian instinct" of yet undeveloped Christians, "in whom Christianity was an undeveloped power, whose faith did not come the length of saying Lord!" for these righteous are actually in part also such as have hitherto been *heathens*.[1] Such also as might not yet be able to say with consciousness and experience, as that converted Hindu: Me, when hungry, Christ has fed; to me when athirst He has given drink, etc.[2] Thus, at last, does mercy abundantly triumph over judgment (Jam. ii. 13);—only those are cursed into whose hearts nothing at all of the love of God, that draws all nations, had penetrated. That there is not required in all to whom the King will at last entirely reveal Himself, a faith in Him which has already reached a dogmatical form and expression, is with a solemn protest here certified against our harsh and narrow theology. Let this be duly considered!

Vers. 41–43. As the sheep, who now for the first time come to know their Shepherd, are yet as in a last outbeaming of love

[1] This correct interpretation is acknowledged also in Keil's Opuscula; recently Alford has expressed himself in favour of it.

[2] Calwer Missionsblatt, 1841, Nr. 22.

Hosted by Google

joined to all His righteous, sanctified, elect ones, as fellow-heirs of the same kingdom—even so, on the other hand, the cursed are actually ripe for the everlasting condemnation, although the deficiency in works of love which is held up before them, not indeed to be viewed outwardly, gives the ground of decision. These two addresses of the King concerning the *having done or not done* are, as it were, a significant *curtain* which hides the wondrous depths of the Divine leadings of all souls, even to this limit: only read the superscription which truly corresponds to the innermost course and state of the thing, and exercise thyself accordingly in inquiring and explaining what is its meaning in connection with all the teaching of Scripture elsewhere, for to this Christ would here draw us; beware only of bringing in that which would be foreign and contradictory to what is simply said. If the evidence adduced from the works, vers. 35, 36, and 42, 43, leaves unexpressed in the background much that concerns the bottom of the heart, which those who are addressed know and experience as the proper ground of decision, the two *sentences*, vers. 34–41, are not the less on that account most decisively and plainly declared, so that between those on the right and on the left, any further and third class remains for ever impossible. It is the first and last, the only curse from the mouth of Him who was to bless all nations; which irrecoverably falls upon the class here brought forward as a specimen, along with all the cursed and rejected. That they have before heard, and on their part rejected, a "Come unto Me," addressed to them in some sufficient way of Divine invitation, is so self-evident that the Judge, as the announcer of His judgment, does not need now to say it. The rejection is the same as in chap. vii. 23, at the close of His first discourse; here, however, it stands in a striking, precisely marked antithesis, word for word, with the reception of the righteous. Come—Depart,—now even more strongly: *from Me!* Ye blessed—Ye cursed,—but *not* of My Father; for they have themselves chosen the curse which drives them *from Him*, the Son, while the righteous now fully and finally come by the Son to the Father. The *kingdom*, with all its glory and bliss—the *fire*, with all its misery! which is prepared for *you*—which is prepared for *the devil* and his angels, the partners of his fall; for there is for men no *decretum repro-*

Hosted by Google

bationis, no book of death, no hell of their own, because the blood of Jesus has atoned for them all; only those who would become the devil's obtain at last his portion. The kingdom prepared *from the foundation of the world:* instead of this it is now—the *everlasting* fire. For only that which is good is in the counsel and will of God everlasting *a parte ante;* what is evil, with its torment, only *a parte post.* The hell of the devil who was created as an angel was, no more than his sin, ordained from the creation, but the hell was prepared from the beginning of his sin: for *the devil, i.e.*, since a devil was; comp. Is. xxx. 33. Only the *inheriting* of the blessed has no antithesis, and can have no other than that it is omitted for the cursed. For the rest, the fire is the inextinguishable continuation of the great conflagration of the world, which is to break forth from the centre of hell (2 Pet. iii. 7, 12, 13), and which is met by the avenging fire from God out of heaven (Rev. xx. 9); Rev. xx. 10 is here presupposed to have already taken place. Were the unfaithful children of light before cast out into a darkness, —now a fire receives the children of darkness, which fearfully lights up their darkness. What have they *done* to deserve this? Certainly as evil-doers much that was evil and only evil; they have certainly also in part hated and persecuted Christ and His followers; at all events they have kicked against His shepherd's hook (as goats), obstinately and completely resisted His gracious leading. All this, however, is not specified; but only the one thing, that in all their doings not even one good work of true love is to be found, which might have showed this resistance to be *not* complete, on which the love of the gracious Judge that covers many sins might, on account of the love which was yet there, be able to graft a gracious sentence. The exact repetition of the particulars in the address to the rejected (from which those foolish preachers, to whom the sublime is too simple, seek to escape by greater abridgment or variation), indicates the exact care with which the Judge will, in the case of every individual, overlook and omit nothing that specially affects him. With respect, however, finally to the fearful *curse*, we observe that in it the *end of the High-priestly office* of Christ is clearly expressed: He who after a once offered *sacrifice* still sat upon the throne, in order, Melchisedec-like, to *intercede* and *bless*, has now no *inter-*

Hosted by Google

cession-prayer, no *blessing* more, for the condemned. The first and last curse of *His* mouth must be an irrevocable one, and He remains *the King* over all throughout eternity; the לְעוֹלָם however Ps. cx. 4, with its *αἰών*, is expired. Dan. vii. 14 (Luke i. 33) stands written now also of the priesthood.[1]

Vers. 44, 45. The reply is, as regards the inner sense, the same as in chap. vii. 22, although the persons are different in the two passages; here it is the worst, most hardened class of all the condemned, with whom the others would willingly put in their word, and lyingly protest even in the moment of well-deserved judgment, *if they could*. Christ will certainly, at the day of judgment, not literally allow the damned "still to speak for themselves" (which strange thing Roos finds here)—so far the literal truth is not to be pressed; but their thoughts are reckoned before Him as if they were expressed in words. *Many* have oppressed and persecuted Christ also in His followers, as Acts ix. 4, instead of letting themselves be taught; *all* have been *goats*, as they are called; *these* here have perhaps done some so-called good works, but not to *Him*, not to God or for God's sake, hence they have had no earnestness and zeal of love, which is always and in everything like itself, but here and there one of the least of Christ's disciples has been hardheartedly passed over. This is enough to show how it has stood with them in other things *besides* these decisive sins of omission. Now everything is made *manifest*, now the entire want of any truly good work, of any actual acknowledgment of Christ as concealed in His disciples, alone condemns—the entire not-having of that grace laid open to all (with or without the name of Christ), which has atoned for and covered also the sins of the blessed. Now, however, Christ, also the *Son of Man* and Shepherd, King and Judge, reveals Himself as the centre of all the inner leadings and relations of the human race: Ye did it *unto Me*, ye did it not *to Me!*[2]

[1] Not as if in Heb. vii. 24, 25, an atonement *ever* open, ever going on, were meant.

[2] Of which profound truth (comp. our remark on John v. 27) what Hase would teach us is only a very distorted presentiment; viz., that this judgment is conducted "according to the rational law of *humanity* itself, which Christ *as it were* personally represents and exercises."

Hosted by Google

Ver. 46. Final fulfilment of John v. 28, 29 (Dan. xii. 2); as the fourth gospel further lifts the curtain. The eternity of misery is quite as *endless* as the eternity of life;[1] *after* this ἀπελεύσονται, according to the terms of their sentence, ver. 41, there follows no Δεῦτε πρός με again, in any *aeon* whatsoever.[2] When the present world passes away, and all that has been prepared in God's decree comes into full realisation, then first begins the eternal misery of those men who are *associated with the devil;* of whose restoration there is not the smallest word to be found in the whole Scripture. As the righteous received their sentence beforehand, so that the damned must hear it, so now the damned go away beforehand without seeing anything of the glory of the blessed. First comes Rev. xx. 15;—then over the closed abyss of the lake of fire, the new world for the blessed, Rev. chaps. xxi. and xxii. Only in accordance with this is Rev. xxi. 4 to be understood;—from *their* eyes, *i.e.*, the eyes of the blessed; and ver. 5, *all things* new, *i.e.*, in *this* new world. For there still *remains* what is said at chap. xxi. 8, 27, xxii. 15, 19. We cannot otherwise read the Scripture, nor otherwise understand Christ. The enduring misery of such as fall to the devil is a deep mystery, just as is the devil's first fall; but it is at the same time quite as clearly attested as eternal life, the mark and prize of our heavenly calling in Christ Jesus. Follow, thou called one, as a sheep the good Shepherd, obey His gracious invitation, *Come unto Me!* with which the first part of this commentary upon His words closed—then wilt thou not hear His dreadful curse, *Depart from Me!* with which we must now warningly close the second part.

[1] Against this exegetically irrefutable sentence, Oetinger in vain maintains that misery *cannot*, in the nature of the thing, be equally everlasting; see in Auberlen, p. 492.

[2] In vain does Lange find a ground of consolation here in the darkness which envelops the rejected, for the words present a clear and unconditional contrast.

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google

THE

GOSPELS OF ST MARK AND ST LUKE.

DEUT. XIX. 15.

עַל־פִּי שְׁנֵי עֵדִים אוֹ עַל־פִּי שְׁלֹשָׁה־עֵדִים יָקוּם דָּבָר׃

LUKE I. 4:

Ἵνα ἐπιγνῷς περὶ ὧν κατήχηθης λόγων τὴν ἀσφάλειαν.

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google

PREFACE.

WHEN wicked men were about to condemn the Holy One of God, with intent to murder the Prince of Life, He, whom the Father had sanctified and sent into the world, with deep humility putting Himself on a level with us, appealed to the maxim of their divinely-given law: "In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall everything be established." He did so as if even He, when lying under a weighty criminal charge, must yield to such a testimony, should it be found consistent. He refers, however, much more to the double and yet single testimony borne by Himself on behalf of His own person and cause; the testimony, viz., of the Father and of the Son. For of course it is only God Himself, in the person of the God-Man, who convincingly attests Himself to the world. When this testimony was, after the resurrection and ascension, completed and glorified by the Holy Spirit, it re-appeared still as a Divine-human testimony in personal forms. First and foremost, every one was such a witness who had received power from on high to see and hear, in whom the risen Saviour lived. But even at this early period the Apostles occupied a place of special prominence: We are His witnesses. They spoke what they had seen and heard, as those who had been with Him from the beginning, during the whole time that the Lord Jesus had gone out and in among men, until the time that He was taken up into heaven. From this time onward they told of His deeds, they reproduced His sayings; the Church of believers received the impress of the life and word of her Lord with increasing zeal and enjoyment, in the full strength and depth and assurance of the life which it had received in and from Him through the Holy Ghost. Then the Evangelists and Teachers particularly were confirmed in their office,—an office bordering on that of the Apostles, and the object of which was to retain sure possession

Hosted by Google

of a treasure which they guard with tenderest reverence and warmest affection.

This is the brief first period of the fresh stream from the opened fountain,—Apostolical Tradition held in the strength and assurance of the Holy Ghost as He brings to remembrance, and explains the truth; dwelling as He then did in the whole Church; teaching some to recount and teach, and others to retain and preserve. This is the ground and soil out of which our four Gospels grew. For, inasmuch as this first fresh life in the earthen vessel of erring sinful humanity was exposed to the constant danger of perishing, without an objective κανών, it was fitting certainly that the revelation of the Eternal Word which had taken place in flesh should also be made in writing, for the Church of all ages, and for the whole world. The Lord who is the Spirit, therefore, chose and prepared special witnesses in order that His cause might again stand, for all faith, and against all unbelief, in the mouth of two, three witnesses: nay, He added yet a fourth witness, thereby superabundantly completing His plan. The Church was enabled by the same Spirit to recognise the gift thus bestowed upon her: and has continued to possess ever since the self-testimony of her Lord in the writings of St Matthew, St Mark, St Luke, and St John.

These sacred writers did not avail themselves of each other's works according to the common practice of bookmaking; but they drew from the one common fountain of the stream which was still flowing on mightily in them and around them. It is thus exactly in accordance with the principle which appeared in the God-Man Himself, that in them also the Divine is at the same time individually human. This fourfold composition sets before us, in inseparable connection, the two things: viz., the most perfect unity of the facts related, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, on the one hand; and the most perfect freedom, and personal life of human composition, on the other.[1]

[1] Or, as Lange says: The relation of the four Gospels to each other is a mystery, on which criticism has expended much hard labour, and which can be understood only when we come to acknowledge that the most perfect inspiration is one with the most perfect freedom of the individual; so that the unity of the different witnesses demands, in its highest strength, the purest individual difference of the testimonies.

Hosted by Google

As far as we are concerned, we abide by the ancient conviction that the *order of sequence* of the Evangelists, which has scarcely ever varied since their writings were put together, depends upon the *order of time;* in this order of time, however, there is involved the order of the *Spirit*, progressing and developing as it advances to the close. In propounding the view which we take of this matter, we find that on the whole we agree with Lange, who has in this case, to a certain extent, the merit of having been the first to point out the right way. Would that he had not in particular instances, by the arbitrary procedure which influences so many of his views, again extinguished the light which he had kindled.

The Publican, called to be an Apostle, is the first who was raised up to testify, against the scoffing Scribes and Pharisees, that Jesus had been proved to be the *Christ*, and had entered *by suffering into glory*. The first word is in the exercise of long-suffering patience addressed to Israel the first-called: St Matthew writes for the Jews in their own language. He takes care, however, within a longer or shorter period, by furnishing a free spirited translation, of equal value with the original, that no interpreter shall, on his own responsibility, translate his Gospel into that language of the world by which the Hebrew was to be so soon supplanted.[1] This is our Gospel according to Matthew, in which the Apostle and eye-witness, so ingenuously confident, so free in spirit, and yet without making one mistake even in the smallest word, fashions into form the first firm kernel out of the living tradition;—a Gospel which no criticism, except one which knows how to penetrate in faith to the depth of this origin, can avail either to own or to understand. "He is the first who played upon the Sacerdotal trumpet:" this expression of Origen has more in it than is at first apparent. The current appropriation of the cherubic

[1] The idea that St Matthew himself translated his Gospel is in itself not a very absurd one, as is evident from the example of Josephus. Thus writes Delitzsch in the *Luther. Zeitschrift* 1850, 3. He very truly remarks, that in the well-known passage of Papias it is manifest that at the time of that account, no one, so far as he knew, was *any longer* under the necessity of translating for himself the Hebrew Gospel. The whole treatise, thoroughly understood, leads to the above-mentioned result; viz., that a Hebrew Original had been authentically translated.

Hosted by Google

figures to the four Evangelists is certainly false: that introduced by Lange is alone correct, according to which St Matthew has the sacrificial cow, and St Luke the man.[1] The first Evangelist shows us the Messiah;—but this means the great deliverance, redemption, and expiation of a lost people and world in the person of Him who has come (chap. i. 21, viii. 17, xx. 28). *This* is the fundamental thought lying behind all; here, at the same time, we may freely say that St Matthew royally sublime, majestic and unbiassed, wielding imperial sway, testifies of the *King*. But we shall immediately have more to say of Him who (chap. ii.) was rejected in Israel: this tragic conflict and issue, related in the light of Christian faith, the existence of which is taken for granted, is the first *history* which leads us out from the Old Testament into the New.[2]

Israel proceeds to reject his King; and the kingdom is given to the Gentiles. For the election's sake the seed of Abraham still has its right given to it: after that the Gospel goes to the heathen. The same Peter who uttered the first word in Jerusalem was here also the first to be employed in this work of transition. He himself, who represents[3] not so much the Jewish Christians as the transition and exodus from them, was less called to write than to speak the Gospel; he merely furnishes, therefore, his son Mark with the Apostolic material for a second Gospel, intended in the first instance for the use of the Romans. St Mark is Peter's true son in power; corresponding to the figure of the Lion of the cherubim, he exhibits before his readers

[1] The sequence referred, in the first instance, to the life of Jesus, "the cow, the man, the lion, the eagle," according to Oetinger (in Auberlen, page 284, ss. 319 ss. 465), is a complete blunder,—the subject spoken of being the "labour of the ox."

[2] It is amusing to true Protestants to read, that Sepp, a man of no real scientific acquirements, notwithstanding his immense superficial knowledge, degrades the first Gospel and assigns it to Philip,—all in the cause of the Romish suppression of the Bible, and with a view to give Peter the first place.

[3] Finally, however, in his second epistle, and when, in the prospect of death, he testifies his oneness with the beloved brother Paul, the Apostle of the Gentiles! Scripture torn to pieces by pseudo-criticism, and history turned upside down, teach now certainly something different; but it is not real scripture and right history.

Hosted by Google

the mighty acts and works of the Son of God,—in clearly defined and on that account more powerful forms; in lofty contrast to Roman might, which knows nothing and effects nothing except what is earthly,—a style of composition in accordance with the genius of the Roman mind. As St Matthew, partly owing to his disposition for argument, and partly on account of the task assigned him, had already given prominence to the sayings, these in St Mark's Gospel retire into the background. Still, there is many a striking particular introduced from the more exact knowledge of Peter for the sake of elucidating those Sayings, and to heighten the pictorial effect of the histories already recorded in St Matthew; for, with these the reader is supposed to be acquainted. St Mark, therefore, is *not* to be placed after St Luke:[1] he relates as the second, yet unbiassed witness, along with and next to St Matthew, drawing his incidents from the one fountain of Apostolic tradition.

St Luke occupies another, and also in the development a later stage; although we are to conceive of the sequence of time in this first development as following in quick succession. We refer with pleasure to the well-grounded statements of *Lücke*,[2] which are very striking, at least as regards the point from which they set out, and which we accept in order to draw from them more definite conclusions. The Gospels of St Matthew and St Mark certainly belong to the first kind and grade of evangelic composition, *the pure collection of tradition:* here, however, we claim the really "pure" collection for the authors of these Gospels. "The Gospel of St Luke occupies a *higher* grade:"—here, again, we make our own reservation in regard to the little word "higher," which other people, perhaps, understand differently. "Here more attention is paid to connection of time and event; here we find a fruitful commencement of ecclesiastical research and description." All very true,

[1] As Clemens Alexandrinus, alone against the unanimous voice of antiquity, asserts; and as Guericke again maintains. Many in the present day follow them in this (Thiersch, in his "Attempt to restore, etc.," which recently he has not retracted in the "Church in Antiquity"); Delitzsch assumes it as a "certain admitted result;" we, however, do not agree with them, but claim for St Mark the second place, though on other grounds and in another sense than Hilgenfeld. We cannot say more in this preface.

[2] Commentary on St John's Gospel. 3d Ed. Vol. i., p. 201.

Hosted by Google

as far as I see; although I must conceive of the "Gospel formations" of these grades very differently from Lücke. Suffice that the *third* Gospel shows an advance upon the former two; it therefore justly occupies the place after St Mark in genuine historical order, even though the commencement of the new arrangement may have taken place altogether at the same point of time. We find here a leaning on St Paul, corresponding to that on St Peter; for it was needful that the two of the Evangelists who were not Apostles should stand upon a sure Apostolic basis. Here the transition to the Gentiles is, for the first time, quite completed; for, to write for Greeks (as all the Gentiles at that time were designated, in opposition to the Jews) was a still further advance towards general humanity. Now St Luke, a Greek by birth and by nature, wrote, as is evident, not merely for Theophilus (he may have lived either at Rome or anywhere else), but for the Greek Gentile world. Thus in the third Gospel there is completed the progress of the testimony for the world onward from its commencement at the first rejection of the Messiah by Israel, as narrated in the first; up through the intervening member, the imposing manifestation of might, as detailed in the second; and thus this third Gospel, a *εὐαγγέλιον σωματικόν*, became acknowledged as a sure foundation. The Evangelist to whom must be given the appropriate cherubic figure, *the human form*, shows us the most beautiful and the most gracious of the sons of men, the Saviour born to us, the Friend of Sinners, the Physician of Men, the grace which appeared in Him calling and alluring all nations. The character of St Luke corresponds in a peculiar manner to what is now called the human character; this principle being that which was represented by ancient Greece.

At the same time, at this stage we find manifest evidence of an active appropriating inquiring spirit. The researches of St Luke, which, bearing as they do the new stamp of the Apostle Paul, and now no longer rooted in the tradition of the first chosen Apostles, take a deeper hold upon the Gospel of the past infancy of the Church, and a wider grasp of the era then just commencing; an era in which it was of importance to blend firmly the subjective conviction of the individual, won over as a catechumen, with the tradition of the Church, which

Hosted by Google

was already losing its unbiassed character, and when an ἀσφάλεια περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων became necessary for the ἐπίγνωσις. This is exactly the historical and no less the symbolical character of his dedication to Theophilus and his prologue. These λόγοι, as the subject matter of ecclesiastical κατήχησις, are not a mere system of doctrine, which must, of course, rest upon a history, but also and especially the history itself, which had been handed down by tradition, including, of course, the words of the Word. They are the πράγματα which might certainly be called to the end of time πεπληροφορημένα ἐν ἡμῖν, but whose διήγησις, even at the time when St Luke wrote, had begun to be multiform, and therefore uncertain.[1] Still, St Luke does not in reality blame (it is only the Spirit that does so inferentially through him) those who had begun what they

[1] The λόγοι in St Luke are exactly the same as the λόγια which, according to Papias, St Matthew συνεγράψατο. It is the fixing in writing by selection and arrangement that is meant. The explanation given by Lange, after Lücke, holds its ground, when understood aright and explained, in spite of Ebrard's *Recensirende Zurechtweisung* (Tholuck's Litt. Anz. 1844, p. 502). Lange L. u. I. 161. Compare Stud. und Krit. 1833, 2. 501. Certainly λόγιον, λόγια cannot mean "oral, running, historical communications; evangelic history still found in the stream of conversation," as Lange precipitately and inexactly says. But from the idea of "sacred utterance, revelation" there might very well arise a form of speech, which might not exactly signify a "sacred book, a revealed scripture." Here, it would be in the plural τὰ λόγια, equivalent to "the things, as well the sayings as the deeds and events, in which God revealed Himself through Christ," and naturally equivalent at the present day to the above, with the addition, "as they were circulated in their yet unwritten form." For συνεγράψατο denotes a certain opposition. Delitzsch is wrong in understanding the expression as denoting "*chiefly* the utterances of the Lord." The most correct view, in our opinion, is that of the Catholic Schwartz: Inquiries into the relations of the synoptic Gospels, p. 114 ss. Λόγια is the Greek word corresponding to the Hebrew דְּבָרִים; and it follows from the nature of Christianity that a revelation of fact applied to the purpose of instruction is what is meant. Papias places himself in the same relation to tradition when he writes the λόγους of the Apostles. The *whole* of Christian truth, says Schwartz, is called sometimes λόγια κυριακά, sometimes λόγοι or διδασκαλία, sometimes ἀπομνημονεύματα or εὐαγγέλιον. In Ignatius ad Smyrn. c. 3 (larger edition), λόγια stands for "the Acts of the Apostles." Very right, we say, as St Luke's prologue with its πράγματα and λόγοι belongs to the second treatise as well as to the first; seeing that the ποιεῖν τε καὶ διδάσκειν (mark this consequence) was only the beginning of the whole.

Hosted by Google

had undertaken: his design in his ἔδοξε κἀμοί is to clear himself and to add to what had already been done. "He has found in general that these treatises agree with this tradition." (Lange.) He is therefore, on his part, less *conscious* than the others are of the inspiration which guides him in his inquiries and his composition. So far is he from desiring to be henceforth regarded as "the first censor and critic of the Gospels previously existing," that he has even "conceded the imperfection of the synoptical Gospels!"[1] No, he is well acquainted, especially with St Matthew and St Mark, and fully acknowledges them, the αὐτόπτης and ὑπηρέτης (for these are the very classes which they respectively represent). But, because other αὐτόπται καὶ ὑπηρέται had also παρέδοσαν what was not equally authentic; and further, because the accounts of this additional matter had already begun to be of various kinds, he brings forward his contribution with the most scrupulous assiduity; and the Spirit elevates it to the rank of a Third Gospel, and allows the other productions to disappear in the Church. He has investigated ἀκριβῶς everything (πᾶσιν scil. πράγμασιν as is manifest from the παρακολουθεῖν, the usual expression for this), even up to the ἄνωθεν of the ἀρχή. In him we make acquaintance with the evidence of criticism: and he himself, in his continuation of his πρῶτος λόγος in the Acts of the Apostles, has given to all later criticism a sure safeguard; directing it to conceive of Church history, down to the present day, as growing out of the life of Christ as we have it in the Gospels:—this is the origin of the Church, and the producing cause of the Apostolic foundation of the Church. Even at the present day it is found that the Gospel according to St Luke and the Acts of the Apostles are the portions of Scripture most suitable for Bible classes, where the object is to re-establish the ἀσφάλεια περὶ ὧν κατηχήθης λόγων.

These are the Three; who after a long period were joined by a fourth, bearing the indisputable seal of the Spirit. St Matthew had given special attention to the sayings of the Lord; and St John completes these by such sayings as it was competent only for him who lay on the breast of Jesus to hear and

[1] As may be read in Sepp. vii. 211, 212.

Hosted by Google

to preserve. St Mark had used the appellation *Son of God*,[1] with marked emphasis, after *Son of David;* and St John gives us, therefore, the deep direct self-testimony of the "only begotten Son," in words which make a deeper impression on the spirit of man than is made even by His mighty deeds. After he had laboured during a whole Apostolic life, quietly and deeply; had even suffered for the testimony of Jesus, and had sent forth the Apocalypse from his place of banishment in Patmos; after Jerusalem had been destroyed, and the prophecy given by the Lord of His first coming had been fulfilled in earnest of that of His second; then at last, and not till then, does St. John write his Gospel, as the higher and highest Apocalypse for all who believe and shall believe on the name of the Son of God, irrespective whether they are Jews or Gentiles, Romans or Greeks.[2] As St Luke, indirectly and in the sense of St Paul, opposes Jewish narrow-mindedness; so now the last controversy of St John is one in which he strikes down all unbelief and every heretical infidel opinion. But he does not, properly speaking, lay down, in order, a collection of carefully investigated historical data; though he too, on his part, supplements his predecessors, and, for example, introduces some mighty deeds, such as the healing of the man born blind and the resurrection of Lazarus. But he looks like the *eagle* upon the "Light of the World." His prologue begins with the most appropriate commencement in the bosom of the Father; and his Gospel unveils for all genuine speculation the deepest *basis* of fact.

We have here the latest help against all the misconception and mistakes of the *latest* times, prefigured as these were by the rising ψευδώνυμος γνῶσις of early Christian times; *against* all Idealistic and Pantheistic perverted speculations.[3] For—

[1] Compare Matthew i. 1 with Mark i. 1; next at Mark i. 24, also further chap. iii. 11, xv. 39.

[2] Or even Germans—we say against Lange, for here every peculiarity ceases.

[3] In so far there is a remarkable presentiment of what is right in the preposterous remark of Fichte, which tells much more than he designed it should do, and than the awkward clause itself really expresses: "It is only with John that the philosopher can meet."

Hosted by Google

though it can be only indicated—the four Evangelists, in their fourfold cherubic figures, correspond finally and prophetically to a historical process of development of the Church throughout its entire history. The idea has before this been thrown out,[1] that the cow, the lion, the man, and the eagle, symbolize the apostolic, the Roman, the Reformed, and the last Church; if we reflect upon it we shall find that the four-formed Gospels admit of being applied in the same way;—on this subject, however, we prefer not entering at large.

These are the four witnesses, whose varied testimony agrees with marvellous harmony. Thus has the Church accepted it; having rested securely upon this testimony from the beginning.[2] Is there to be now for once no more agreement? Far from it! Rather, as it is written that before the Sanhedrim two and three witnesses were not to be brought together at once; so at this day wherever such a procedure is adopted, false witnesses never do agree. By separating the Gospels from each other, we obtain a brilliant proof of their unity. And certainly the accusation is groundless precisely where it is well founded; for it must first falsely assume that the Evangelists intended to write as if they were writing chronicles or minutes, in order that the differences which certainly do exist, the apparent contradictions which mark the *Life*, may, along with this vicious assumption, make out a charge of real contradiction.

These volumes have already shown, and will still further show,

[1] Meyer has a beautiful poem on this subject in his own way, in the "Bl. für h. W."

[2] The fundamental thought to which we gave expression in the preface of the first volume, "that by all who believe in a revelation of the Son of God, it must be taken for granted that His word cannot have fallen to the ground; cannot have dropped and been lost through the sieve of erring human composition," depends upon the yet more general position, taken for granted, also, as implied in believing; and applicable to the life and works, as well as the sayings; viz., "that the image of Christ, as it is handed down to us in the four canonical Gospels is genuine." The 126th § in Martensen's Dogmatik contains an admirable statement expressed in a few strikings words against the new criticism; and concludes with the following unanswerable sentence: "that even the conviction of the internal truth and original perfection of the testimony of the Gospels is a fundamental experience which is renewed at every age in the Church and in every individual believer."

Hosted by Google

that the person and history—that the Word of the Lord Jesus—remain essentially the same in all the Evangelists. That, on the other hand, a chronologically arranged harmony which shall exhibit the particular circumstances and words is scarcely possible, we have also admitted and avowed. The design of our Commentary is to invite all readers, but especially all learned readers, to apprehend the deep reason why the Wisdom of God has denied us such a history of the wonder of wonders in history; and to persuade them in the midst of all the laborious disputings and demonstrations about the shell, not to lose the kernel. Let it not, however, be said that we must be contented to remain in a state of pure uncertainty and perplexity as to the external course of the life of Jesus in the Gospels. That we may not be thus misunderstood, we now give, in a tabular form, our view of the harmony. We do not arrange the materials in this table with any degree of dogmatism; but with the conviction that many particulars may reasonably be arranged differently by others. We append it for the purpose of showing that we have not expounded the Sayings blindly; and at random; and also that an investigation conducted in a spirit of dogmatism, which will not allow of anything remaining undetermined, will meet with enough in the first place to bring it to a pause. This table will at the same time serve as an Index to the Volumes already published, and also to a portion of Vol. iv.; so as to enable the reader at once to turn to any particular passage which we have expounded. The continuation of this table, applicable to the rest of the work, will appear in due course in a subsequent volume:—

Hosted by Google

	St Matthew.	St Mark.	St Luke.	St John.
Annunciation of the Births of John and Jesus,	.....	.....	i. 5—38	.....
Visit of Mary to Elizabeth,	.....	.....	i. 39—56	.....
Appearance of the Angel to Joseph,	i. 18—25	.....	.....	.....
Birth and Circumcision of John,	.....	.....	i. 57—80	.....
Birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, and His Circumcision,	i. 25. ii. 1	.....	ii. 1—21	.....
Presentation in the Temple, Simeon and Anna,	.....	.....	ii. 22—38	.....
Visit of the Magi; Flight to Egypt; Abode at Nazareth,	ii. 1—23	.....	ii. 39, 40	.....
The Child twelve years old in the Temple,	.....	.....	ii. 41—52	.....
The Appearance of the Baptist (September or October), and his Work,	iii. 1—12	i. 1—8	iii. 1—18	i. 6—8
The Baptism and Temptation of Jesus (December),	iii. 13—iv. 11	i. 9—13	iii. 21—iv. 13	.....
Immediately upon this: the Message to the Baptist and his Testimony,	.....	.....	.....	i. 15, 19—34
The first Disciple and the first Miracle in Galilee,	.....	.....	.....	i. 35—ii. 11
Brief Abode at Capernaum; first *Passover;* Purification of the Temple, and Miracles in *Jerusalem*, Nicodemus,	.....	.....	.....	ii. 12—iii. 21
Longer Residence and Baptizing in *Judaea*, Controversy and Testimony thereon,	.....	.....	.....	iii. 22—36
Journey to *Galilee* through *Samaria* (the end of December); the Woman of Samaria,	.....	.....	.....	iv. 1—42
Second Miracle in Galilee,	.....	.....	.....	iv. 43—54
Preaching in Galilee; Rejection at *Nazareth*,	.....	.....	iv. 14—30	(iv. 44)
Imprisonment of the Baptist,	xiv. 3—5	vi. 17—20	iii. 19, 20	(iii. 24)

Hosted by Google

	St Matthew.	St Mark.	St Luke.	St John.
Jesus in Capernaum and Galilee; Continues the preaching of John,	iv. 12—17	i. 14—15	.....	.....
Calling of the Fishers of Men, Peter's Draught of Fishes,	iv. 18—22	i. 16—20	v. 1—11	.....
Powerful Teaching and Healing in Galilee,	iv. 23—25	(i. 22)	.....	.....
The Choosing of the Apostles, and Sermon on the Mount,	v. 1—vii. 29	iii. 13—19	vi. 12—49	.....
The Leper and the Centurion's Servant,	viii. 1—13	i. 40—45	v. 12—16 / vii. 1—10	
Capernaum: the Demoniac in the Synagogue, Peter's Wife's Mother, Many Sick Folk,	viii. 14—17	i. 21—34	iv. 31—41	.....
Jesus withdraws from the Crowd, Visits other Cities,	.....	i. 35—39	iv. 42—44 / (viii. 1—3)	.....
One Day: The Calumny about Beelzebub, Reply to it, the Woman who pronounced Him Blessed, Mother and Brethren,	xii. 22—50	iii. 20—35	xi. 14—36 / viii. 19—21	.....
On the same Day (on account of Matt. xiii. 1, Matt. iv. 35), Intention to Cross the Sea,	viii. 18	.....	.....	.....
Still before this: the Offer of a certain Follower,	viii. 19, 20	.....	.....	.....
(A later Incident of the same Kind and Parallels to it of uncertain Date),	(viii. 21, 22)	.....	(ix. 57—60)	.....
Further Abode in consequence of the People: *Preaching in Parables,*	xiii. 1—53	iv. 1—34	viii. 4—18 / (xiii. 18—21)	.....
Actual passage: Stilling of the sea, Gadarene Demoniac,	viii. 23—34	iv. 35—v. 20	viii. 22—39	.....

Hosted by Google

	St Matthew.	St Mark.	St Luke.	St John.
After the Return (another day): the Sick of the Palsy, Matthew's Call and Entertainment, Question on Fasting, ...	ix. 1—17	ii. 1—22	v. 17—39	.....
The Daughter of Jairus, and the Woman with the Issue of Blood, ...	ix. 18—26	v. 21—43	viii. 40—56	.....
Two blind Men and a Demoniac, ...	ix. 27—34	.....	.....	
Some Time after: new Attempt and *Second* Rejection in *Nazareth*, ...	xiii. 54—58	vi. 1—6	.....	.....
Raising of the *Young Man* at *Nain*, . . .	.....	.....	vii. 11—17	.....
Message and Question of the Baptist, . . .	xi. 2—30	.....	vii. 18—35	.....
(Undefined incidents of this early period); Anointing by the Woman who was a Sinner; Another Entertainment in a Pharisee's House,	.....	.....	vii. 36—50 / xi. 37—54	.....
Journey to *Jerusalem* at the Feast of *Purim* (in Adar); Bethesda, ...	.....	.....	.....	v. 1—47
Plucking of the Ears of Corn; Withered Hand; Deadlier Enmity. (Beginning of Nisan, again in Galilee), ...	xii. 1—21	ii. 23—iii. 12	vi. 1—11	.....
Sending out of the Twelve, ...	ix. 35—x. 42	vi. 7—13	ix. 1—6	.....
Narrative of the Death of the Baptist; Fear of Herod,	(xi. 1) xiv. 1—12	vi. 14—29	ix. 7—9	.....
Return of the Apostles from their Mission (after a few days!)	.....	vi. 30	ix. 10	.....
First Feeding, Five Thousand. About the Time of the *second Passover*, ...	xiv. 13—22	vi. 31—45	ix. 10—17	vi. 1—15
Miraculous Passage over the Sea. Temerity of Peter,	xiv. 23—34	vi. 46—53	.....	vi. 16—25
Discourses in Capernaum about the Bread of Heaven; Offence and Confession, . .	.....	.....	.....	vi. 26—71

Hosted by Google

	St Matthew.	St Mark.	St Luke.	St John.
Many Sick People Healed,	xiv. 35, 36	vi. 54—56	.....	.....
Discourses about human Traditions to the Scribes,	xv. 1—20	vii. 1—23	.....	.....
Departure to the Phœnician Coasts, the Canaanitish Woman,	xv. 21—28	vii. 24—30	.....	.....
Once more many Sick People Healed; Before this (by the way), the Deaf and Dumb man,	xv. 29—31	vii. 31—37	.....	.....
Second Feeding, Four Thousand: Demand for Signs; Warning about Leaven,	xv. 32—xvi. 12	viii. 1—21	.....	.....
The Blind Man at Bethsaida,	.....	viii. 22—26	.....	.....
Journey to *Jerusalem* at the *Feast of Tabernacles* (September); probable Residence till the *Feast of the Dedication* of the Temple (December),	.....	.....	.....	vii. 1—x. 39
Cesarea Philippi: What do the People say of the Son of Man? *First Intimation of His Sufferings*,	xvi. 13—28	viii. 27—ix. 1	ix. 18—27	.....
Transfiguration, Lunatic. *Second Intimation of His Sufferings*,	xvii. 1—23	ix. 2—32	ix. 28—45	.....
Tribute Money and Stater (in Adar?)	xvii. 24—27	.....	.....	.....
Controversy about Precedence, the Little Child. Sayings of wider Import,	xviii. 1—35	ix. 33—50	ix. 46—50	.....
Last Journey to Jerusalem. St Luke's Account of it (with incidents and sayings of a somewhat earlier date interspersed),	(xix. 1)	(x. 1)	ix. 51—xviii. 14	.....
Of Divorce; Blessing of the Children,	xix. 1—15	x. 1—16	xviii. 15—17	x. 40—42
Resurrection of Lazarus,	.....	.....	.....	xi. 1—53
Good Master, What shall I do? Forsake all! What shall we have then?	xix. 16—30	x. 17—31	xviii. 18—30	.....

Hosted by Google

	St Matthew.	St Mark.	St Luke.	St John.
Parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard,	xx. 1—16	.....	.....	.....
Up to Jerusalem! *Third Intimation of His Sufferings*,	xx. 17—19	x. 2—34	xviii. 31—34	.....
Petition of the Sons of Zebedee,	xx. 20—28	x. 35—45	.....	.....
The Blind Men at Jericho,	xx. 29—34	x. 46—52	xviii. 35—43	.....
Zaccheus; Parable of the Pounds,	.....	.....	xix. 1—27	.....
(Jesus in Ephraim)? The date quite uncertain,	.....	.....	.....	xi. 54—57
Six Days before the Third Passover: Anointing by Mary,	xxvi. 6—16	xiv. 3—9	.....	xii. 1—11
Sabbath.—Entrance into Jerusalem, Weeping over the City,	xxi. 1—11	xi. 1—10	xix. 28—44	xii. 12—19
The Lord *begins* to *Inspect* the Temple,	xxi. 12	xi. 11	xix. 45	.....
Greeks, Voice from Heaven, Sayings,	.....	.....	.....	xii. 20—37
(General Summary of the Testimony of Jesus),	.....	.....	.....	(xii. 44—50)
In the Evening to Bethany,	xxi. 17	xi. 11	.....	.....
Monday.—Cursing of the Fig-tree,	xxi. 18, 19	xi. 12—14	.....	.....
Proper *Cleansing of the Temple*, at the end as at the beginning,	xxi. 12—16	xi. 15—18	xix. 45—48	.....
Tuesday.—The Fig-tree is Withered,	xxi. 19—22	xi. 19—26	.....	.....
Vindication and Parables,	xxi. 23—xxii. 14	xi. 27—xii. 12	xx. 1—19	.....
Ensnaring Questions by the Pharisees and Sadducees,	xxii. 15—46	xii. 13—37	xx. 20—44	.....
Woes on the Pharisees and Jerusalem,	xxiii. 1—39	xii. 38—40	xx. 45—47	.....
The poor Widow,	.....	xii. 41—44	xxi. 1—4	.....
Prophecies and Parables,	xxiv. 1—xxv. 46	xiii. 1—37	xxi. 5—36	.....
(Residence in these days),	.....	.....	xxi. 37, 38	.....

Hosted by Google

A few explanations may be added to this table, for the purpose merely of guarding against the contemptuous charge that we have not thoroughly weighed what has been advanced; and which, at the same time, from the aphoristic form in which they appear, may direct and stimulate to deeper inquiry. We confine ourselves to individual remarks, where they seem especially needed, or to references to what will be found treated of in these volumes; we shall, after that, take a comprehensive view of the course of each synoptical Gospel in reference to the order of time.

That the angel appeared to Joseph previous to Mary's visit to Elizabeth, appears to us not to be in accordance with real decorum, or with the delicately conducted progress of the history.

We hold it extremely arbitrary to regard Luke iii. 1, 2 as speaking not of the first commandment from God to enter upon the duties of his office, but as a "later call" addressed to the Baptist shortly before his imprisonment (according to Wieseler). That the baptism and temptation of Jesus occurred in summer or spring, appears entirely unfounded; the winter appears to us the far more suitable time,[1] parallel to His birth and in accordance with Luke iii. 23. From His baptism till the passover there are few occurrences; but the period would be an extremely long one, according to Wieseler, S. 258, during which we have no notice of any occurrence having taken place. On the other hand the commencement of Jesus' work in Galilee is naturally very rich and full.

In placing the events related from Matt. iv. 12, to xi. 30 so early as before the feast of *Purim*, we again differ from Wieseler; who, however, has by no means shown that the journey of Jo. vi. 1 is identical with that of Matt. iv. 12. To carry out such a view will involve us in many difficulties in regard to particular points in the narratives of the synoptical Evangelists, since John vi. must harmonise with Matt. xiv. Matt. iv. 12 itself intimates that a period of time must have elapsed to which the events related down to John iv. 54 belong; then Matt. v. 1 is still more manifestly connected with chap. iv. 25 by the τοὺς

[1] On the appearance of the Baptist in October, Sepp, among many very strange things, gives some hints not to be despised. Life of Christ, i. p. 118 ss.

Hosted by Google

ὄχλους; the Sermon on the Mount, therefore, cannot have been brought in from a later period, or be made up of portions of later addresses, as some would have it.

Mark i. 21 is by no means to be regarded as following in immediate connection after ver. 20; ver. 22 rather intimates a *preceding* powerful teaching (*for*, generally applicable to His teaching), and that in the same expression which St Matthew uses to denote the impression made upon the people by the Sermon on the Mount. We do not consider it necessary to show that ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις ταύταις, Luke vi. 12, is not a formula of sequence, but a general expression applicable to the first rich period of the work of Jesus.

The definite statement in Matt. viii. 1, 2, 5 (which again agrees with Luke vii. 1), is quite sufficient to fix the place of Luke v. 12, notwithstanding the indefinite form in which it appears.

Matt. viii. 18, with its indefinite πολλοὺς ὄχλους is by no means in immediate connection with the preceding verses, the 16th and 17th; for Mark i. 35, and Luke iv. 42, agree in giving an entirely different conclusion of the evening spent at Capernaum. For the arrangement in Matthew, see Vol. i., page 352. From this we are to understand that his statement in chap. viii. 23 is to be referred to the day, if, according to chap. xiii. 1, the parables had preceded; as the definite statement of Matt. iv. 35, must remain unbroken. This was certainly one of the richest days; of these, however, there must have been many, occasioned by the great crowding of the people and the unwearied activity of the Lord in the first period.[1] Matt. xiii. 1 is to be understood in a *pluperfect* sense, as giving a repetition of the discourses spoken of as having already begun to be delivered, in chap. xii. 22, and the delivery of which had taken place before the multitude of the works narrated in chap. viii.

[1] Schleiermacher speaks of the very wonderful appearance presented by the life of Christ when we notice the striking contrast between a great day in which everything is heaped together, even to the highest degree of improbability, and a great and almost empty intervening space. But such great days occur in every great life; and should not the history give us an account of some of these? Yet it does not affirm that the intervening empty spaces were in reality empty.

Hosted by Google

and ix. The calumny about Beelzebub may have occurred in the early part *of the same day*, at the commencement of His work (notice also in Mark iv. 1 the πάλιν ἤρξατο). And the offer of the man to follow Him (as to the others who made a similar offer see Vol. i. p. 350–356) when He was preparing to cross the sea;—after that, the preaching in parables to the people as they pressed upon Him (chap. viii. 18, Luke viii. 4), still before He actually departed; on the passage the stilling of the sea, on the other side, the Gadarenes, who immediately forced Him to return (still on the same day, or more probably after a night's rest, for according to Mark iv. 35, it was already evening);—all this is not too much for one day. And when in Matt. ix. 2 the same day *appears* to have embraced a multitude of events—Mark v. 21, and Luke viii. 40, 41, present the same appearance—the explanation is to be found in the peculiarity of the Evangelists, who do not pay much attention to divisions into days when, in filling up some magnificent, comprehensive scene, they hasten on from one event to another by a καὶ or a καὶ ἰδού. It is not only the evening, Mark iv. 35, that gives light here, the entertainment of Matthew requires at all events an invitation and a preparation; and yet this entertainment undoubtedly occurred between the return from Gadara and the raising of Jairus' daughter.

Matt. ix. 9 hangs quite naturally upon what goes before, exactly as does Luke v. 27. In like manner Matt. ix. 14 is a natural continuation of the narrative, and Luke v. 33 gives a comprehensive view of the whole scene. We cannot see why, in opposition to the express statements of these two narratives, Ebrard places the question about fasting *before* the entertainment. A clear reason, however, is contained in Matt. ix. 18 for placing the healing of the man sick of the palsy, and the matters connected with it, *before* the daughter of Jairus; indeed, the formulæ, Mark v. 21, Luke viii. 40, leave no room for hesitation.

Matt. xi. 2 does not carry forward the narrative in regular order, but, after the general closing formula, ver. 1, steps backwards into an earlier period; as is manifest from the loosely connecting clause, ch. xii. 1, at the end of this chronological parenthesis. St Matthew desired to *reserve* the contents of ch.

Hosted by Google

xi. as an important conclusion to a first part of his description of the Messiah establishing His claims by works and words.

On Matt. xi. 25, see Vol. ii., p. 113.

Matt. xii. 1 again comes in correctly in chronological order, with the exception that the journey at the feast of Purim is omitted. We have the rubbing of the ears of corn placed, not after the Passover, but fourteen days earlier: see Vol. ii., p. 126. There thus remains before the time when the thousands were fed about the Passover (John vi.), sufficient time for the sending out and the returning of the twelve; whose journeyings, moreover, we are not to consider as having lasted any length of time. They came back in their simplicity very soon to the Lord; as may be seen in Mark vi. 30, and still more manifestly in Luke ix. 10. The idea of Gemberg, that they spent nine months on their missionary tour, is to us inconceivable.

That Matt. ix. 35, till x. 42, has *anticipated* the chronology is again in accordance with the plan of the Evangelist to conclude with chaps. viii.–xi. a first cycle of the works and sayings of Christ.

By placing Matt. xii. 22 so early (we are compelled to do so by the other Evangelists), the τότε certainly loses every special chronological import. In constructing a harmony, however, it frequently occurs that we cannot avoid either giving up the most manifest data in one Gospel for the sake of another, or abandoning the task altogether of reconciling apparent contradictions, in any other way than by taking such a view of indefinite formulæ:[1] and it is well known that τότε, when it stands alone, is usually employed throughout the first Gospel as a particle of this kind. We have already seen that chaps. xii. and xiii. are connected together; and we have proved (Vol. ii., p. 201) that the parables could not possibly have been spoken before the Sermon on the Mount.

On the rejection at Nazareth, which, as related in Matt. xiii.

[1] Every one knows this who has had the least experience in such matters. Many a result laboriously wrought out has been dashed to the ground by some intervening statement; for every example the whole proof must be examined on every side. The author has given such proofs for many of his positions: whoever examines his results will find it to be so.

Hosted by Google

54, we are to regard as having occurred a second time, see our exposition of that passage in this volume.

Matt., chaps. xiv. and xv., hang quite well together; and fall into the time generally indicated in John vii. 1.

We protest on behalf of Matt. xvii. 24–27 against Wieseler's chronology, on the ground that his exposition of the δίδραχμα, as denoting the civic tribute money paid to the Roman Emperor, is quite untenable. See what has been said on this subject, Vol. ii. p. 388.

In Matt. xix. 1, we find the last journey of St Luke pointed out. See our remarks in the exposition.

Although the connection between Matt. xix. 15, 16, and also that between Mark x. 16, 17, appear to be close, we do not know where else to bring in (and here for once we agree with Ebrard) the *resurrection of Lazarus*—an event for which it is very difficult to find a place. Here there is peculiarly a great *non liquet* for the special point of time of this mighty event; still a poor harmonist must even for this put down at least something that is possible. We require only not to read (and we are not compelled to do so) the 15th and 16th verses of Matt. xix., in immediate sequence; but ἐπορεύθη ἐκεῖθεν as the concluding formula, and then the Καὶ ἰδού, as beginning a new paragraph.

St Mark does not arrange his pictures in his first part up to chap. vi. 7 in exact order. This is an axiom which requires certainly to be well proved against many critics. In chap. ii. 1, for example, the wide expression δι' ἡμερῶν certainly allows of our transposition.

Mark iii. 20, 21 cannot possibly, as Ebrard expounds, be a special occurrence after the Sermon on the Mount (and after the leper). The ἔρχονται εἰς οἶκον is an indefinite beginning of a new picture, whose frame is not finished till we reach ver. 35. Οἱ παρ' αὐτοῦ must be *His relatives*, for ver. 31 is manifestly connected with ver. 21 by an οὖν; referring back to something going before, after the "πνεῦμα ἀκάθαρτον ἔχει" of the Scribes had been put down as parallel to the "ὅτι ἐξέστη" of his relatives. See Vol. ii. p. 190. The short notice in Luke viii. 19–21 is in its right place, at least so far as what is related took place on the day of the parables.

St Luke gives in chap. iv. 31, 32 only a general *formula*,

Hosted by Google

which, therefore, does not immediately connect ver. 33 with ver. 30: still the general foundation for the particular miracle here has the same weight as at Mark i. 21, 22.

In Luke vi. 6 it is the following Sabbath, probably the Sabbath immediately following, that is meant; and thus the passage agrees with Matt. xii. 9, and we obtain an explanation of the πάλιν in Mark iii. 1.

In Luke vii. 11 the reading ἐν τῷ ἑξῆς is the only correct one, and is merely an indefinite *formula* for a really later occurrence.[1] For the raising of the dead recorded by St Matthew as having taken place *alone* is certain; this selection itself leads us to this supposition,—indeed the whole history looks like it, especially the *former case.* Vol. i. p. 411, and our remarks on Luke vii. 13, 14 in this volume. Ebrard has overlooked this, S. 144. According to his arrangement the young man at Nain was brought to life immediately after the daughter of Jairus; and yet this event must be connected (on account of the ἐν τῇ ἑξῆς) with the whole section containing the Sermon of the Mount and the events down to Peter's wife's mother, which, as we have proved on satisfactory grounds, must have taken place before the raising of Jarius' daughter.

Luke ix. 57, 58 is probably a very conceivable *repetition* of the event and the word, Matthew viii. 19, 20, in the real life of Jesus. We can scarcely, with Ebrard, refer the μετὰ ταῦτα of Luke x. 1, merely to the sending out of the twelve, and not also to what had been immediately related at chap. ix. The history of the other individual may in this case have been anticipated by St Matthew as a parallel case.

We must, in opposition to Ebrard, place the whole contents of Matt. xv. 1 to xvi. 12, *before* the journey to the feast of tabernacles, Jo. vii., and all matters connected with that journey as far as chap. x. 39; for otherwise the two feedings would be too far distant from each other, not to speak of many other considerations. Bengel's simple and probable idea is, that the Lord re-

[1] If we adopt τῷ, there is no reason why we should also adopt καθεξῆς, as at ch. viii. 1; since the fact of the passage being the only one where the phrase occurs is not sufficient to prove that phrase to have been one commonly used by St Luke: there is as much reason for altering the τῷ ἑξῆς in that passage to make it conform to this one.

Hosted by Google

mained at Jerusalem from the feast of the tabernacles till that of the dedication of the temple. We have already expressed ourselves doubtful (Vol. ii. p. 285) whether the "Scribes which were of Jerusalem," Matt. xv. 1, Mark vii. 1, had returned from the feast of the passover, Jo. vi. 4. That, according to St Mark, the confession of Peter followed immediately after the conversation about the leaven, is not true; Mark viii. 27, opens a new scene with an indefinite *formula*.

How then, according to the above assumptions, does each of the synoptical Evangelists stand related to the chronological order of his contents? We shall now take a glance at this, for the purpose of making manifest at least the possibility of our table.

St Matthew passes over between the 11th and 12th verses of chap. iv. the following matters of which we have the record given us by St John; viz., the provisional engaging of disciples, the first miracle at Cana, the first Passover at Jerusalem, a residence in Judea, the journey through Samaria, and labours in Galilee, which are as yet rather divided into separate portions, and do not possess any very public character, as far as the imprisonment of the Baptist. Still there remains in his Gospel, chaps. v.–vii., what is really the proper commencement of the Lord's ministry; the first solemn preaching of His real public appearance, the tone and scene of which were anticipated by a preparatory work and collecting of disciples. In chap. viii. 13 he passes over the Demoniac in the Synagogue; and ver. 17 is consequently, in the first instance, a concluding formula. In ver. 21 he appends, as has been already observed, a later parallel to an event which occurred at that time, vers. 19, 20. The parables delivered on the day mentioned ver. 18, when the Lord was still on the sea, and before He set sail, St Matthew reserves for his chapter of instruction; as he confines himself in the first instance to the Lord's *works*. See Vol. i. p. 414. He relates, therefore, immediately, the stilling of the storm, and the story of the Gadarenes, together with what follows it, as far as chap. ix. 34. After he had given, in vers. 35, 36, a general transition-formula, he opens a new scene: the programme of the teaching on the Mount is entered upon; disciples are called; miracles in abundance are wrought, though the hostility only of the Phari-

Hosted by Google

sees is excited; then He sends out the twelve:—to this paragraph we have a general conclusion in chap. xi. 1, similar to the one already noticed, and which is again repeated in chap. xiv. But he now goes *back*, chap. xi. 2, to the message from John which had been sent at an earlier period (when accounts of the *works* of Christ first reached him); passes over the feast of Purim; yet inserts, in correct historical sequence, chap. xii. 1–21, what had taken place previous to the sending out of the Twelve. With chap. xii. 22, he still goes further back, using his indefinite τότε in order to exhibit the origin of the hostility now mentioned for the second time, and to narrate its *first* outbreak; he consequently introduces here what had happened before the stilling of the storm. Chap. xiii. 1, therefore, has this meaning: even *then* He had, after such sayings addressed to His enemies, spoken the following parables to the *people*.—Finally, after all these transpositions he restores chap. xiv. again into the chronological order left off at chap. x.; brings up from an earlier period the imprisonment and beheading of John, vers. 3-12; and, with the single exception of the passage chap. xxvi. 6-16, which also belongs to an earlier period, carries on the chronological order till the end. He thus passes over the feast of Tabernacles and that of the dedication of the temple between the 12th and 13th verses of chap. xvi.; in chap. xix. 1, also he passes over the incidents and sayings of this last journey, which St Luke has preserved; the resurrection of Lazarus also is not mentioned.

St Mark, who begins at a later period of the history than any of the other Evangelists, passes over, like St Matthew, the first year—which bears the character of a year of gradual quiet preparation—and begins ch. i. 14, 15 exactly as St Matthew does ch. iv. 12–17. But then, for the purpose of pressing forward *in medias res*, and εὐθέως opening up before us with imposing effect the great scene of the works of Jesus, he deals in nothing but chronological transpositions, and *heaps picture upon picture without the least concern about the sequence of time*. He falls all at once, chap. i. 21, into the events which took place after the Sermon on the Mount; and these events follow each other in chronological succession down to ver. 39; again in vers. 40–45 he brings in what happened at an earlier period, and passes over

Hosted by Google

the Centurion altogether. In chap. ii. 1–22 he anticipates, in like manner, the events that took place after the journey to Gadara; and from ver. 23 to chap. iii. 12 he brings in matter of a still later date. Now for the first time, chap. iii. 13 (referring by the εἰς τὸ ὄρος to the well-known tradition), he goes *back* and begins with the Sermon on the Mount; of which, however, (except by the allusion to it in "the mountain"), he gives no account except as regards the choosing of the Apostles.[1] He has already related what happened immediately after this; he therefore passes over it, and proceeds in exact chronological order, through chap. iii. 20, 21; till he mentions the calumny about Beelzebub, and from that point again, in exact order (according to our harmony), to chap. v. 20. He had already anticipated in chap. ii., what *followed* this (Matt. ix. 1–17); he therefore proceeds straight onward in chronological order from chap. v. 21 to chap. vi. 6. He then passes over the young man at Nain, the sending out of the Twelve, the feast of Purim (as well as what he himself had previously related, chap. ii. 23–iii. 12), and continues the narrative after chap. vi. 7, exactly as St Matthew does, putting in, also like him, at the wrong place, the death of the Baptist and the anointing at Bethany.

St Luke, after having narrated the appearance of the Baptist, and the Baptism and Temptation of Jesus, passes over, like St Matthew and St Mark, the first year, except that he relates our Lord's first sermon at Nazareth, and His rejection by the inhabitants of that city. (In chap. iii. 19, 20, he has appended at once the imprisonment of the Baptist, the account of which the

[1] Because, as our Table shows, the sending out of the Twelve followed immediately after Mark iii. 5, 6, it occurred to the Evangelist immediately to go back to their choice. There is a relation of combination of the same kind in Luke vi. 12; and another in Matt. xi. 2, where, instead of what followed chronologically in chap. xiv. 1, 2, there is introduced for the first time a statement about John of what had occurred at an earlier period. Gemberg gives an entirely different combination, which, proceeding from the idea that St Mark narrates according to the order of time, leads to very peculiar results. *Stud. und Krit.* 1845. 1. We do not feel inclined to allow our system to be overturned by this; we must not, however, confute it at length. Meanwhile it is enough that our view of St Mark's Gospel agrees with the oldest view we have, that of Papias.

Hosted by Google

other Evangelists have introduced at a later part of their Gospels.) In chap. iv. 31–34, he anticipates the progress of the history as St Mark does; in chap. v. 1–11, he brings up from a former period a special example of the early calling of disciples; in chap. v. 12 he introduces a narrative which he manifestly avows to be wholly indefinite; the portion from chap. v. 17 to vi. 11, is of the same character, all the events there recorded having happened at later periods. He now brings up, chap. vi. 12, from an earlier period, exactly as St Mark does, the solemn choosing of the disciples and the Sermon on the Mount; appends to this, chap. vii. 1–10, an event which happened not long after; with chap. vii. 11–50, again he springs forward, and with chap. viii. 1–3 introduces a general description as a *resting-point*. From this he turns back in chap. viii. 4–39 to the discourse delivered in parables, to the storm and to the Gadarenes: the proper connection at this point appears to have been unknown to him; hence he brings in, vers. 19–21, what took place before the parables, and in ver. 22 a phrase implying *want of knowledge* is used in manifest opposition to Mark iv. 35.[1] Finally he has introduced the Gadarenes quite correctly after the storm. What happened upon this, according to St Matthew, he has, like St Mark, already anticipated; he, therefore, proceeds with the narration of Jairus and of the woman with the issue of blood, down to ver. 56. Again, he has already given an account of the young man at Nain, of the Message of John, and also of the rubbing of the ears of corn, and of the withered hand; he therefore advances in chap. ix. to the sending out of the Twelve, and from this point onward abides by the chronological order. The only peculiarity is that in chap. ix. 17 he omits much that happened after the first miracle of the loaves, as is seen in the Table, and does not join the other two Evangelists till he reaches the matters related in the passage from the 18th to the 50th verse.

With chap. ix. 51 he begins the portion which is peculiar to

[1] We may remark, however, on this most instructive example that St Luke, even when he had not ascertained everything exactly, yet remains free from positive inaccuracy. His phrase καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν μιᾷ τῶν ἡμερῶν, although, in the same breath, he had related the events of *that very* day, *borders on a direct contradiction* of St Mark's authentic and definite expression, ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ὀψίας γενομένης,—but it does nothing more.

Hosted by Google

himself, and which has been called the *journey-narrative.* This name, as applied to this portion of the Gospel, may be justified *a parte potiori;*[1] as at least the greater part of it manifestly rises out of the last journey to Jerusalem, *i.e.*, out of a journey and tour in connection with the determination expressed at its commencement, "*Now to Jerusalem, there to suffer and to die.*" We may see from chap. xiii. 22, 33, xvii. 11, xviii. 31, 35, xix. 11, 28, that this thought was at every point brought to the remembrance of our Lord. The sequence is not indeed perfect in every particular; the Lord is not in reality always approaching nearer; but for example, even in chap. x. 38, He has already advanced from the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, though not when approaching it for the last time. In like manner, perhaps, St Luke inserts here and there some sayings from a preceding period; certainly this is not the case with chap. xii. 22 (as we saw in our exposition), or with x. 21. It may be so, for example, with chap. xiii. 18–21; and most certainly it is so with chap. xi. 14–36, where we have a narrative of what, according to St Matthew and St Mark, happened at a much earlier period. With what are we to connect the expression of the 37th verse, incapable as that expression is of having any more definite aspect given to it, ἐν δὲ τῷ λαλῆσαι? We certainly are not to read it as if it were followed by ταῦτα; it can be understood only as meaning, "when on one occasion (at that time), He was saying such and such things."[2] Nothing more satisfactory can with any degree of certainty be made of these *Singularia Lucae;* although ingenuity may make the attempt and—lose its way. From chap. xviii. 15, again, St Luke agrees with the other two Evangelists.

Such is our unbiassed view of the chronological relations in the synoptical Evangelists; in the defence and confirmation of this view there is much which we could say. Those who do not

[1] At least better than that other description which finds here a "*Gnomology,*" a *corpus doctrinae,* formed out of all kinds of fragmentary sayings without any regard to the history; as, for example, was at one time maintained by Vertling against Bengel; *Collectanea Lucae,* as Roos called it. We find it impossible to admit that Luke ix. 57, after the significant intimation of ver. 51, does not refer to the journey to Jerusalem.

[2] See what has been said on this subject in our remarks on the above passages, in this and the following Volumes.

Hosted by Google

feel any interest in Harmonies may drop the subject. Any one, however, who desires seriously to enter upon the subject may *study* diligently what we have thrown out in the form of brief hints, and as incentives to study. We can have nothing to do with those who quarrel and vex themselves about these matters under a twofold false hypothesis;—as if the fixing in every individual case of the chronology, which is left so undetermined by the sacred writers, were the very first thing to be attended to in the life of Jesus; and, further, as if our wisdom could, must, and should arrive at unquestionably certain results in this matter. The man who begins his studies in this department with such a state of mind will never end them; the man who has not, *first* of all, thoroughly examined and understood the words and works of the Lord in themselves, and as they lie before us, had better not touch with hasty hand the subject of harmony. A thorough exposition of these words and works should come first; and, after that, their arrangement in chronological order: first, let us get the picture, and then frame it. The reverse practice, so much in vogue, receives the punishment due to it for being contrary to nature. The intention and aim of all who are conscious of their own duty and the limits of their own ability, and therefore of all really scientific men, can only be *to make attempts* at harmony; and in the midst of the different possible attempts that may be made, to resent the imputation of unanswerable inaccuracies, and to maintain a correct theory of inspiration. If the Son Himself did not know the time of His second coming, should we be surprised that the Spirit has allowed His Evangelists to remain in much *ignorance* (significant and salutary) as to many matters of detail connected with the times and the days of His earthly life? But that *positive* and *essential* mistakes, even as to a day or an hour, have anywhere been made, has never yet been proved: the most keen-sighted scrutiny has rather issued in unexpected solutions. How much, according to Jo. xxi. 25, might still have been written! But the wisdom of the most holy accommodation to our capacity has meted out what is felt to be at present an abundant fulness out of this inexhaustible wealth. Although χωρῆσαι in that passage does not mean ability to comprehend in the understanding, yet the hyperbolical expression, "That the world itself

Hosted by Google

could not contain the books," is a judicious figure and a proverbial saying, meant to express the sentiment, that "human nature could not completely comprehend and apply the whole."

To show, finally, *why* each of the three Evangelists has left the chronological order as he has done, is a question which belongs to the last and most difficult department of real Gospel-criticism; that, namely, which has for its object to ascertain the plan of arrangement which must have been adopted by the Evangelists according to fundamental thoughts and important real connecting links. We think it right to abstain in this Preface from making any remarks *on this subject;* and have, in the course of our exposition, only occasionally thrown out a remark or a hint, where the text or the contents of the passage naturally suggest a thought. According to the design of our book, we to a great extent omit discussing the peculiar character of each individual Evangelist; that we may not be drawn aside from the simplicity, above all other things necessary, which receives what is related as really the works and the words of Jesus. The selection and arrangement of events, though much less the exhibition and classifying of documents, belong to the individual plan: to expose this latter plan is probably a prize reserved for simplicity in future times; for, at present all with much, too much ἰδία ἐπίλυσις are occupied with it. Even what *Lange* has provided for the construction of this plan, correct though his fundamental views are, does by no means appear to us to be conclusive; on the contrary, he is, often enough, not exempt from the danger which he is well aware is incident to the department of Harmony; that, viz., of becoming entangled by temerity in the enchanted forest, and in the depths of "secret arrangement," where this danger is certainly still greater than it is anywhere else.

Hosted by Google

Hosted by Google

THE GOSPEL OF ST MARK.

TO THE UNCLEAN SPIRIT: HOLD THY PEACE.

(Mark i. 25; Luke iv. 35.)

OUR exposition of the sayings, as recorded by St Matthew, concluded with the words in which the Saviour of men fore-announced His final, unalterable, judicial sentence. These words are, "Depart ye cursed into the everlasting fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels,"—therefore not prepared for you men, but for the devils; assuredly not from the foundation of the world; but from the time that there have been, and because there are, devils. The new commencement of the Lord's public sayings, as resumed in St Mark, is from the very first in accordance with this their termination. We here see, in the first chapter, the Son of God, whose coming to us is the *Gospel*, introduced by the Forerunner in the name and in the concluding words of the prophets; anointed and glorified from heaven by the Spirit, and the voice of the Father; tempted by Satan, spared by wild beasts, served by angels; followed by disciples whom without delay He had called; acknowledged and named by the *devils* whom He expels from men, but rejecting with marked sternness their final enforced testimony. He has come to deliver men, to judge devils: this the latter know earlier and better than the former; for heaven and hell bear testimony to Him for behoof of the earth,—"the kingdom of spirits knew Him even under the form which concealed Him from the world." So far the scene which the second Gospel discloses to us is the same as that of the first. But the whole is delineated, all at once, within very brief compass, in great, simply and sublimely powerful strokes; so much so that the very first chapter expresses clearly the special character of St Mark's Gospel as indicated by

Hosted by Google

us in the Introduction. We have observed in our Preface to the first volume that any one Gospel, even that of St Mark, gives clearly, strongly, and incontrovertibly enough, the truth, ever verifying itself afresh, on which, as on a sure historical basis, the doctrine of the Church stands. If we contemplate and examine thoroughly this single *first chapter of St Mark*, what a fulness of testimony does it contain, encircling on every side the One who stands in the midst; what antecedents and consequents are there connected with Him alone; how great is the assurance of this second writer,[1] who knows that he also writes and testifies of Jesus through the Holy Ghost! How entirely unconcerned is he about the doubts or oppositions of his contemporaries or of future generations! And yet everything has been written with a wise regard for the future.

St Mark has the special gift of terse brevity and of graphic painting in wonderful combination. While on every occasion he compresses the discourses, works, and histories into the simplest possible kernel, he, on the other hand, unfolds the scene more clearly than St Matthew does, who excels in the discourses; not only do single incidents become in his hands complete pictures, but even when he is very brief, he often gives, with one pencil stroke, something new and peculiarly his own. It is very instructive and interesting to consider these peculiar gifts of St Mark; this however is foreign to the design of this work, as these peculiar gifts have to do rather with the narratives than with the sayings;—as, for example, in the expression, ver. 13, "He was with the wild beasts." On the other hand we have now to do with the narrative at vers. 23–25.

In the synagogue at Capernaum[2] there is a demoniac, who, of

[1] For we repeat that "the result of sound criticism will always be to prove that the order in which the Church has arranged the four Gospels is the correct one, whether viewed externally or internally."

[2] St Mark and St Luke anticipate the later occurrence. St Mark, with his carefully used εὐθέως, has given, vers. 21, 22, partly a general description, such as that we have at Matt. iv. 23 (εὐθέως is the word he employs from the beginning to denote the rapid course of the Lord's life, as he passes from one great and important event to another); here he passes over, in the first place, the choice of the disciples, the Sermon on the Mount, the Leper, the Centurion, and steps forward into the midst of the first teaching and working of miracles, a scene of paramount importance

Hosted by Google

course, has crept in unobserved. The proximity of the Lord compels the unclean spirit to make himself known by bearing testimony to Jesus through the utterance of a loud cry. There is nothing peculiar in the fact that the Lord expels the spirit: there is something peculiar, however, in the spirit knowing and naming the Lord.[1] The injunction, "*hold thy peace*," standing, as it does, by the side of "come out," is new in St Mark, and is of great significance. Christ will not suffer Himself to be named and praised by the devils. To them, and to their dark knavery, He is sharp and severe. He has none of His Saviour-tenderness for those who are condemned and reserved for judgment. He never permitted *the devils*,[2] after the first attempt, to proclaim that they know Him (ver. 34), although they often made the attempt, chap. iii. 11, 12. The address of the spirit here, ver. 24, is partly parallel with that other address, chap. v. 7 (Matt. viii. 29). In three respects, however, it is peculiar. First, in the ἡμῖν and ἡμᾶς, the utterance of the single spirit speaking in name of the whole body of the powers of Satan. Secondly, in the Ναζαρηνέ, by which he at once addresses the Lord; not merely making use of the appellation common at the time (Luke xviii. 37), but undoubtedly using the word because this name of contempt, given to Jesus in His state of humiliation, was destined to be brought into honour on earth, in hell, and in heaven (Mark xvi. 6; Acts ii. 22, xxii. 8). Finally, in using the name, expressive of mediation and victory, borrowed from the prophecy of the 16th Psalm, or at least closely connected with it, and very specially denoting the person of Jesus as the antagonist of hell, "*The Holy One of God*." Erasmus correctly translates this phrase by *Ille sanctus Dei*; compare the other appellation which generally corresponds to this one, Luke iv. 41; Mark iii. 11. Ἦλθες ἀπολέσαι ἡμᾶς

for the beginning of his Gospel. After this he carries forward his historical narrative till ver. 39. Then, however, he introduces, at last, the healing of the leper; let it be observed, however, without a εὐθέως and with the indefinite expression καὶ ἔρχεται. Thus the incident in the synagogue, as is obvious from ver. 29 (and with this Luke iv. 38 agrees), is to have its place assigned to it between the 13th and 14th verses of Matt. viii.

[1] Acts xix. 15. "With Jesus I am well acquainted, and Paul I know."

[2] Not "*the sicknesses*," or "the sick!" We may see how impossible it is that such was the meaning of "possessed" as understood by the Evangelists.

Hosted by Google

is a question, as in Matt. viii. 29. It breaks forth with an ἔα of anguish (not, "desist!" "let us alone!" as if it were an imperative from ἐάω, but an interjection ah! woe! Hebr. אֲהָהּ) in anticipation of the judgment, of which the associates of the devils also shall in time to come be made partakers, Heb. x. 27. "Let us rather give testimony to Thee." But the Lord will by no means be thus publicly proclaimed. The devils malignantly and maliciously, with all fear, anticipate the plan of His life with a view to perplex Him in regard to it, and to prepare for Him (as Mark iii. 22 follows after verse 11) scandal and suspicion. Therefore, as the Master, He does exactly what (Acts xvi. 16–18) His Apostle afterwards did; and what, unfortunately, His disciples now-a-days often fail to do when they do not reject, with sufficient decision, any testimony given from hell in their favour. "*Hold thy peace*," He says. The spirit, yielding a reluctant obedience, *cries out* at least once more before he departs; but he dares not utter one other word after his Judge has shut his mouth.

TO PREACH IN OTHER PLACES ALSO.

(Mark i. 38; Luke iv. 43.)

The three Evangelists unite in relating that the miraculous cure of the mother-in-law of Peter brought many sick persons to Capernaum, on the evening of the day on which it was wrought. But St Mark and St Luke add that our Lord, early on the morning after this day, a day spent in labour and in preaching, retired into the wilderness. In the narrative of St Luke, especially, we may observe how the noise and the concourse increased (iv. 14, 15, 32, 37, 40–42); and this suggests the cause of the withdrawment of the Lord into the wilderness at this time, in order to collect His thoughts in solitude, and prepare Himself afresh for dealing with others. According to St Mark, who undoubtedly knew most exactly the real state of matters, it was "Simon and those with him," who hastened after Jesus, and said: All men seek for Thee; it is not only we that wish to have

Hosted by Google

Thee for ourselves, but all men are in this same state of mind. The view of St Luke, which is indeed in substance the same as the above, is that the multitudes, ὄχλοι, go after Him desirous of bringing Him back; the οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ of St Mark may also have been individuals whom the people had despatched as their representatives. There is thus a struggle for Him, the result of the many instances of healing and of the expulsion of devils which had taken place; men are determined not to lose sight of one in whom such power resides. In the midst of all this press, however, the Lord is altogether as calm, serene, and collected on the subject of the work which had been given Him to do, as He had been, when, according to the preceding narrative of St Luke, He was expelled from Nazareth. He needed, according to St Matthew viii. 17, to collect His thoughts and to strengthen His soul in solitary prayer; but when found out and disturbed He immediately recognised the interruption as an admonition from His Father to work: He feels no annoyance at the intrusion, but is ready once more, in all kindness for men,—"I am at your call, I have had enough of rest." But He does not so give Himself up to them as to return back as they desired to a place in which He had laboured enough: the way on which He was sent, to which His Father calls Him, leads Him further on, that *all men*, whether they seek Him or not, may partake His benefit. He who commanded the devils to be silent, will by no means suffer Himself to be lauded with turbulence, even by men, as a mere worker of miracles; when matters are taking this turn He goes away, as He does everywhere else in similar circumstances. The import of His address given in reply to those who seek Him and hold Him fast, which St Mark and St Luke record in different words, but to the same effect, lies thus in the double antithesis: not here only, but *elsewhere* also; not merely to work miracles, but *to preach*.

The reading in St Mark ἄγωμεν ἀλλαχοῦ, which rests on good external authority, is in this way recommended and justified: it brings εἰς τὰς ἐχομένας κωμοπόλεις into more exact similarity to καὶ ταῖς ἑτέραις πόλεσιν of St Luke, and gives strong emphasis to καὶ ἐκεῖ. The Saviour of the world, sent in the first instance to Israel as Minister of the Circumcision, could certainly not continue to reside in one place, or even in several places in

Hosted by Google

succession. He must proclaim, testify, and work, everywhere; at least He must travel carefully over the populous public cities or large market towns of Galilee,—the great theatre which was assigned Him; as, for many reasons, He had it not in His power to confer favours either personally or even by means of the Apostles upon all the cities of Israel before the Judgment (Matt. x. 23). There is thus given at the beginning part of the explanation of the reason of His travelling up and down the country. The other reason is strictly connected with this one; that I may *preach* there also, namely the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, as St Luke explains it; compare Mark i. 14; Luke iv. 18, 19. For *therefore*, says He, and not only to heal the sick and those possessed with devils, have I come, and been sent. *There* we have, still further, in the very first chapter, an explanation of the design and value of His working of miracles; such as we find near the beginning also of St John, ch. iv. 48. Miracles were wrought only to introduce and confirm the word; never in such numbers as the people desired; but always to such an extent only as was good for directing them to that work, which He was always commencing afresh as His proper work, the preaching of the Word.

The expression in St Luke is, "therefore am *I sent:*" that in St Mark, however, is assuredly the original, "therefore I *have come forth:*"—for the reading ἐξελήλυθα is to be preferred. We must not, however, with Pfenninger, adopt the superficial rendering, "I have come forth from my domestic retirement and obscurity;" and certainly not, "I have come out at this early hour *from the city* into the wilderness, in order thus to escape being followed by the crowds of the citizens of Capernaum." This exposition[1] is very plainly refuted by the reading in St Luke, ἀπέσταλμαι; which shows us that we have here in St Mark a remarkable instance of one of the expressions peculiar to St John's Gospel put into the mouth of the Lord, "I have proceeded forth from the Father, and come into the world;"—although this designedly is not expressed so plainly at the beginning. In fine, it is to be understood that the Lord, by the

[1] Which, however, very unexpectedly Lange (with Stolz) is inclined to prefer.

Hosted by Google

expression before us, declares His prophetical office to be merely the first and immediate object of His life (as He does also in John xviii. 37), without prejudice to other duties, as we know, and as He Himself elsewhere declares. He knows, however, His way and walks in it, rejecting every false claim, firmly and securely; to preach the Gospel from place to place is quite as sacred a duty in its own time (to speak with St Luke, *I must*), as it is afterwards, when the hour has come, to suffer, to be silent, and to die. Let a single word be sufficient to point out the practical import of this saying to those who are sent out by Him as heralds, according as their vocation is to one city or to one nation.

THE SONS OF THUNDER. (THE LITTLE SHIP READY.

(Mark iii. 17 [9].)

To introduce into this exposition of the Lord's discourses all the expressions which are indirectly quoted or indicated, is a task beyond our ability; and one, moreover, which we have not the least desire to attempt. We proceeded on this plan throughout the Gospel according to St Matthew. Occasionally, however, there must be exceptions. Thus, for example, in the very passage before us, Mark iii. 9, though there is no more than a mere indirect indication of what our Lord on one occasion said to His disciples, we would by no means withdraw that saying from our consideration merely on account of the form in which it appears, if it were a saying of special import. This, assuredly, it is not; it forms one of those merely human utterances of human intercourse, which the Evangelists, for this very reason, rarely quote directly, occasionally indirectly, but most commonly omit altogether. The scene, which is parallel to that of Matthew xii. 15–21, merely shows us again the Lord withdrawing Himself from men; as much from their pressing throng, as from their active hostility. He is desirous of having provided for Him the means of proceeding by sea as often as He fings it convenient to do so; frequently from the place altogether, and

Hosted by Google

frequently, at least, from the "press," to a quiet place where He may preach the Gospel, as in Luke v. 1–3. He wisely provides for this as a matter of human arrangement; and therefore enjoins His disciples to see to it that a small ship wait on Him (not at this particular time merely, but generally); that it be ready, in order that He may enter into it, as we find Him frequently doing, as often as the multitude renders this desirable. Thus we behold the Saviour not merely manifesting "a regard to suitable accommodation," as Bengel correctly remarks, but also with all humility as a man planning and arranging for what His divine wisdom finds to be good; taking due precaution against the pressure of the multitude, as often as He trusts His person in the midst of them. Here lies the spirit and substance of this saying, which, so far, has not been recorded in vain, or without a lesson for us.

The *giving of the names* by our Lord (ver. 17), and the statements made by Him on that occasion, are certainly of much more weighty import,—certainly not merely a subject of exegetical curiosity, as Gurlitt superciliously affirms. By the insertion of his catalogue of Apostles at this place, we see that St Mark refers (ver. 13) to the choice of the Apostles which took place previous to the Sermon on the Mount (St Luke confirms this, vi. 13); but that, at the same time, he appends to this a more general view. Consequently we are by no means to understand that all the names were given precisely at this time; but as Simon was surnamed Peter at an earlier period, the sons of Zebedee may have received their appellation earlier or even later, as "Sons of Thunder." There are two similar and common names: St Mark evidently means to say that they were to be so called only when spoken of together as a pair of brothers; but also that each brother by himself was to be a Son of Thunder. We have already expressed our sentiments (Vol. i. p. 54 and Vol. ii. p. 337) on the giving of the names considered in itself. Our view is that on these two disciples was conferred the honour of a new name as being men of a like spirit; for the same reason which led to their being taken with Peter into a narrower circle within the Twelve. If this be so, it is certain that their name indicates *two* things: *first*, a description of their natural character (as brothers, as sons of

Hosted by Google

Zebedee), a character full of meaning and power; secondly and chiefly, their *apostolic character*, for the new name which the Lord gives them is assuredly a name summoning them to their office, and prophetic of things to come. Hence every view which entirely disregards either of these is false. Most assuredly is that view false, which finds in it a mere expression of *blame;* for the Evangelist has, with perfect simplicity, placed the appellation *Peter* by the side of their honorary titles. The Lord by this title designated them neither as "boisterous" nor as "hot-headed men" (as Von Ammon has expressed himself, and refers us to רגשׁ); but most certainly, though not without a warning running side by side, He indicates a good natural ground in them, out of which His grace will afterwards produce something of powerful efficacy. To connect the incident related at Luke ix. 54, 55 with the giving of these names, is so far correct as these brothers, who generally spoke and acted very much together, and were very closely bound up with each other, were men of a strong ardent spirit, and not in the least of the soft and effeminate character which unfortunately and without any reason has been supposed to have belonged to John. The idea that at the time when they would have called down fire from heaven the Lord gave them this name, in the way of a reprimand and "that they might always be reminded of their enemy," is to be simply rejected. Because, as Olshausen convincingly remarks, there is not a single instance in the whole New Testament, or even within the entire compass of Bible history, of a reproof being given by affixing a name. Moreover, this false combination, in the case of the Evangelists St Mark and St Luke, cannot be maintained with a due regard to their inspiration. St Mark would not, in his catalogue of Apostles, and by the side of the name of Peter, have fastened securely and solemnly upon the brethren an epithet which, on this supposition, the Lord assuredly did not intend should remain with them. And St Luke (whose Gospel, besides, refers to that of St Mark) would not have recorded other matters and omitted the most striking word, had that word been uttered on that occasion.

That St Mark's translation, *υἱοὶ βροντῆς*, "Sons of Thunder," must be correct, is self-evident, and is confirmed by Christian

Hosted by Google

antiquity. And though we cannot exactly restore the root of the Aramaic word (for the roots רעשׁ, רגשׁ, רגז run into one another, and we know little of the dialect then in common use), this much is certain, that the thunder is here used in the sense of power to shake. The Hebrew word רַעַם is used in this sense. The point of comparison is not the *secret nature*, nor the *terrible effects* (and so on in their fanciful applications) of the thunder; but the *power of the word*, as in Ps. xxix. and Ps. lxviii. 34. Even heathen antiquity speaks of powerful eloquence as thunder.[1] Theophylact, in his *μεγαλοκήρυκες*, gives the simplest expression of our view; but, on the other hand, by his addition of *θεολογικώτατοι*, introduces an idea for which there is no warrant. On whatever occasion the Lord may have said "Ye are or shall be called Sons of Thunder," He must have conveyed to their minds, "I know that out of the depths of the strong feelings of a fervent heart there shall break forth a *powerful* testimony of the Word. I will therefore make you, as My Apostles, at a future time thunderers, with the thunder of the heavenly word." It is not exactly (as Meyer, and Luther's marginal note have it), "I will make you fiery, terrific, evangelists and preachers;" for that would be lightning instead of thunder. We know nothing further of St James, who met an early martyrdom. But St John's thunder-power is sufficiently seen in the sharp edge, the fearless and unimpeded march of his majestic *testimony*, by the side of that stream of abounding love which pervades it and sheds its halo around it.

PARABLE: THE SEED GROWING OF ITSELF.

(Mark iv. 26–29.)

We have already pointed out (Vol. ii. p. 196, 198) how this beautiful parable, the peculiar import of which has, in consequence of its simplicity and brevity, been commonly, but most unjustly, overlooked, fits into the cycle of parables in Matt. xiii.,

[1] Plato and Demosthenes are called *tonantes* by Columella (*Res rustic. praef.* i. 30); Cicero, after Aristophanes (Acharn. 530), speaks of Pericles exactly in the same way.

Hosted by Google

like an extra one omitted there, or an intermediate clause thrown in as a bond of connection. It is not merely an *appendix* to the preceding parable (as Braune says), but an independent link in the chain. To consider it as another version, the product of inaccurate memory, of the parable of the tares (to which it appears appended even in Rieger's New Testament), is a piece of great folly, originating either in irreverent treatment of the sacred text, or in a superficial reading of the text on the part of such believers. Neither can it have been given at one time by the Lord as a simple basis which He afterwards and on another occasion expanded into the parable of the tares; it is, generally, no mere modification of another parable. For, in the first place, St Mark gives from vers. 1 and 2 to ver. 33 an exact account of the many parables delivered at the same time; and in the next place this extra parable, not belonging to the kernel of the seven, has a fundamental idea altogether peculiar to itself, and one which has nothing to do with the tares among the wheat.

Seedtime and harvest: this was the general fundamental tone of the four first or exoteric parables in St Matthew. The seed *grows* on till the harvest: this was the fundamental note at the end of the second, Matt. xiii. 30, which the third, ver 32, again takes up. In all probability, therefore, this parable given here by St Mark, the idea of which is remarkably and completely contained in this *growing*, takes its place as a transition from the tares to the grain of mustard seed. The seed once sown grows, according to its own nature, *of itself*, from its own impulse and power of life: with this we have manifestly the immediate reference and limitation with which our Lord here speaks of it. The self-inherent growth-power of the kingdom of God (as a whole and in individuals, great and small), in reference to what *we* know of it, and what *we* do to it, in its independence of human care and labour;—this and nothing else is the theme, as Lisco has well said, and as *Brandt's Bible*, guided by its special object, has for once happily expressed the true meaning. The man who overlooks this must find himself in the predicament of saying of the main subject of the parable that the description is not to be pressed, that it is not the main thing! *Seedtime* and *harvest* are mentioned only briefly at the

Hosted by Google

beginning and end; the idea lying between these, viz., "the kingdom of God has been established broadly and deeply in order that its development may proceed from within," comes forward strongly in the two intermediate verses. It is affirmed that the growth proceeds at certain fixed times; secretly, without the knowledge of man; of itself, without the co-operation of man; finally, also, in a natural progress from one step of advancement to another

The *Man*, who sows the seed, τὸν σπόρον (not his own seed, αὐτοῦ; as in Luke viii. 5), is throughout this parable not the Son of Man, the Divine sower, properly so called. For, first, the sleeping during the night is not applicable to Him. And although this may be interpreted as descriptive of appearances (*it seems to us* as if the Keeper of Israel slept, not looking after His seed), yet the ὡς οὐκ οἶδεν αὐτός is decisive—an expression which, especially when so strong as it is here, can in no sense be applied to Him. For, the seed is neither more nor less than the energy of the Lord; His power, Spirit, life; even the Lord Himself. How should He then not be cognisant of its most secret springing and growth?[1] The person of the sower, therefore, is varied according to different didactic purposes, like the seed and the field; and the man who sows the seed in this parable is a disciple and servant of the kingdom, one who labours in and about the kingdom. Particularly is it one who scatters the seed abroad upon others; though the analogy admits a certain application to the heart which has received the seed, and its subsequent care for itself. Further, as in nature the fruit produces seed, or the self-propagation of the plant is the seed (Gen. i. 12; Is. lv. 10), so here the σπόρος, ver. 26 (exactly what in the two preceding parables is termed the

[1] In V. Gerlach we read, "After Christ has scattered the seed He exerts no influence by His personal presence or by outward means upon its growth." But ὡς οὐκ οἶδεν αὐτός means a great deal more than this. Even *non curat* cannot be said of the Lord, who truly looks after His field. With equal violence to the text, Alford understands the expression as applicable, at least at the same time, to Christ and His servants: to the former, "*He knows not how; i.e., from bodily absence, He watches not how, witnesses not how.*" But the words will not admit of this,—and the sense, moreover, is not true. For Christ continues to influence by His *spiritual* presence; effectually watches and protects.

Hosted by Google

seed of the kingdom) and the καρπός are to a certain extent identical and run into one another. What is said in ver. 21 of the lighted candle, may so far be applied here: will any man have merely fruit without at the same time casting abroad seed? Additional remarks on this subject will be found in Vol. ii. p. 212.

Vers. 26, 27. First, therefore: The kingdom of God in regard to its growth, its great development from seedtime to harvest (a development, however, which proceeds onward through an oft-repeated seedtime and harvest), is of the following nature. *A man scatters*, or men *scatter seed abroad:* it is, therefore, always spread and propagated by human instrumentality; subject to this condition, however, that the springing and the growing of the seed are beyond the knowledge and control of the man who had scattered it. He lets day and night succeed each other according to the ordinary course of nature; he leaves the God of heaven to bring day and night over the earth, an operation beyond the reach of man; and remains quietly within his own sphere, the sphere allotted to man: he sleeps during the night, and is awake during the day. Assuredly the reverse, indolent sleep during the day, is not permitted; on the contrary, the ἐγείρεσθαι, or the daily new awaking, expressly includes all diligence, carefulness, and attention on the part of the *labouring* husbandman (2 Tim. ii. 6), rendered necessary by the place which he occupies. Not to concern himself at all about the seed after he has once cast it abroad were assuredly culpable neglect; for, the looking after it, that it be not destroyed, or that the field be not turned up, the watering it and such like occupations, form still so many parts of the prolonged duty of the sower, just as the education of children forms part of the τεκνογονία, 1 Tim. ii. 15. But our Saviour means to say this (and in doing so to glance at Matt. xiii. 25), that no one need be in painful anxiety about it; he is not, after he has sown his seed, forthwith to go to sleep altogether; but he is permitted and enjoined to take that sleep during the night which the necessities of human nature require. We may from the figure make a still further application, and limit Ecc. xi. 6 by Ps. cxxvii. 1; thus finding out the due medium between useless tormenting anxiety and ruinous thoughtless indolence. This much is certain; all that

Hosted by Google

man can do in protecting and helping is a mere trifle; the great business of springing and growing goes on without us, chiefly in the secret fruitful womb of *night*, as is well known to all who are acquainted with nature. There is a truth corresponding to this in the hidden progress of the growing kingdom of God: the nights of men and of nations quietly force the seed even still more effectually than do the days, although here again the sunshine and the life-dew of the light are indispensably necessary for conception in the womb of darkness.

The expression "night and day" here signifies two things. First, the necessary *amount* of the time intervening between seedtime and harvest; so many days and nights must elapse ere the blade, the ear, and the full corn in the ear, appear in succession. Secondly, the *quality* of this time, or the favourable influences of weather and fructification, which the days and nights given by God contain within them. This is the usual way with the seed in the ground. Upon this we might consider that in regard to spiritual seed, the Lord God on His part gives only favourable weather, and nothing but His blessing, 1 Cor. iii. 6, 7. Here then are entirely *excluded* both the knowledge and the influence of man. Especially the knowledge as to the "how" of this secret and wonderful thing (ὡς οὐκ οἶδεν); on the other hand, all the most secret shooting, forcing, springing, in the kingdoms of grace and of nature, lie open before God, because this is His very work. Mark this well, ye preachers and educators, in opposition to all anxious Methodism.[1] Apply this also to your own hearts, ye anxious spirits; beware of the petty measurement of the daily and hourly barometrical state of your feelings and spiritual life; beware of watching, and brooding, and refining; beware of keeping diaries in such a sense as this. Ye must not childishly uncover the seed, and look how the growth goes on.

Ver. 28. Still less can we draw upwards the seed and the stalk with the hand, so as to produce a more rapid springing and growth. Every false help is excluded. Man (ver. 26) has no need to know anything about the matter, or to render any

[1] The good Wesley, in commenting on this parable, cannot away with this; hence he gives as the meaning of "sleeping and waking, night and day," exactly the reverse; *that is, he has it continually in his thoughts.*

Hosted by Google

help at all; for the earth brings forth its fruit *αὐτομάτη*.[1] This means, naturally; because of the principle of vitality made inherent in the seed. Assuredly to hope for harvest without having sown is stupidity. It means more: "For the *earth* bringeth forth—originally endued by God with the fertility which meets the seed, and which He continually renews and fertilizes by influences from above: assuredly stones and rocks form a surface on which nothing grows. The *αὐτομάτη* excludes only the co-operation of man (the *αὐτός* immediately preceding); it includes the energy of God, which is at work in all things. It has now been sown, it has its own part to act; you may now be quiet and act yours; see that you procure good seed, do your day's work in sowing it, then *wait*, Jam. v. 7. "Earthly seed is long in springing up; imperishable seed is longer still." It is only when the seed comes forward of itself,—when *it grows up*—that it is shown to be seed. When covered up, and apparently dead, it bursts through the ground, rising from the dead, having been brought to life and having grown when *below* (in the night, in secret); next it continues to grow, springing further up when above ground (in the day time, in the light). The sprouting below ground was a concealed growth, the growth above ground is a continued shooting and sprouting; we know, however, and understand, as little of what is above as we do of what is below, as little of the day as we do of the night.

Once more, we have the natural progress of the plant from stage to stage;—the most observable feature of the season between seedtime and harvest, and of the vegetable world during that period of the year. The *three* stages mentioned in the parable correspond to the children, young men, and fathers, 1 Jo. ii. 12, 13; only, however, in general, and without any sharp boundary lines. Hence, after the *πρῶτον* we do not find a *δεύτερον* and a *τρίτον*, but merely an *εἶτα*; for there are no intermediate stages and transitions: the meaning is, one after the other, and not before; as at the end the harvest is after and not before the ripening of the fruit. (A man does not sow grass or ears of corn; neither does he reap and use *them* as such.) As the *root* spoken of in the first parable (ver. 17) is presupposed

[1] Even Philo applies *αὐτομάτος* to what the earth brings forth without the labour of man.

Hosted by Google

in the springing up, so must the ears stand upon the blade, and the corn must find the ears in which it is to grow. The blade is still like tares, as the little children in Christ are still "as carnal," 1 Cor. iii. 5; the ears, on the other hand, seem even ready for harvest, before they have received the corn and are *filled* or ripe. Our Lord gives everything here in a figure drawn from nature, simple yet full of meaning, that we may meditate upon the kingdom of God. In this figure He brings prominently forward the most important fundamental features of that kingdom; He teaches us not to despise quiet perennial growth, not to lose heart because of small beginnings; but to wait without any precipitate misconceptions, for the right termination.

Ver. 29. To the eye of the true husbandman the fruit *presents* itself with *sufficient distinctness* at the proper time, as ripe; *i.e* quite full, as *fruit*. This idea, in contrast to the concealed condition of the plant at its origin, and to its uncertain appearance at the intermediate stages, is expressed emphatically by παραδῷ, —a word which has been manifestly selected for this very purpose; on its middle signification see Winer § 39. The idea meant to be conveyed is therefore not merely, "of its own accord also," but still further "as he himself also knows." The fruit visibly ripe invites to harvest. It is only in its most general application that *this* harvest can be regarded as denoting also the last great harvest of the whole world before God; for, as has been already said, the parable in the first instance speaks of the manifold human sowings and reapings which intervene between God's seedtime and God's harvest. The harvest therefore, in the first instance, is the human harvest, with a view to a sowing to be again immediately commenced. Do not come back with the harvest waggons immediately after thou hast sown a little, but let the earth and the seed have time; dost thou see, however, the fruit, then immediately (εὐθέως) put in the sickle, Joel iii. 13. The Lord here again changes designedly the expression: He does not speak of reapers as in Matt. xiii. 30; for here it is the people connected with the farm that are the sickle bearers; there is no need of angels. Ἀποστέλλει is not a *Latinism* of St Mark's, *immittere falcem*, but a Hebraism of our Lord's discourse, as in Joel iii. 13, שִׁלְחוּ מַגָּל, ἐξαποστείλατε δρέπανα; even ὅτι παρέστηκεν stands literally there. The man must now appropriate

Hosted by Google

to himself the corn that has grown up; he reaps it, and in doing so he gathers it together, that he may again sow it out to advantage, in order to be always accumulating fruit to life eternal, John iv. 36. His design is not to store up in granaries, that he may rest and enjoy himself before the time. The parable begins again at the beginning; and thus the growth of the kingdom advances before men upon the earth. We have here, on the one hand, very peculiar thoughts, deeply hidden in their simple expression; yet, on the other, the significant selection and arrangement of these expressions, makes the meaning clear in its simple unity. This parable given by St Mark is not therefore an inaccurate version of some other parable; neither is it a rough and unfinished draft, drawn up hastily on the spur of the moment by the Lord, and intended to be afterwards wrought out into a larger form. No, it is a parable which to a right *exegesis* becomes self-interpreting; yea it is a most precious gift of the Lord to His servants, preserved by the Holy Ghost through the instrumentality of St Mark, containing a very essential supplement to the other kindred parables, a very wholesome warning on the subject of all human interference with the sowing and the reaping of God, a complete explanation of what the growth of the seed properly is, and how that growth goes on.

EPHPHATHA, AND THE PROHIBITION TO SPEAK OF IT.

Mark vii. 34–36.

This one single little word, "*Ephphatha*," though soon translated into every language, as here in the first instance it has been translated into Greek, is a word of mighty power and import. It was so when first uttered by the Lord to the man who at that time was healed; and to the people who praised this new miracle in common with all the other miracles of this miracle-working Physician. It is of still greater import to us who know better, and should praise better, Him who makes all things good which have been made evil by sin,—who by a pure work of opening and loosing the bands, brings a restoration to the first creation in which all things were very good. But, in order to

Hosted by Google

bring ourselves into contact with this mighty word of the Lord's lips, we must consider in connection with it the whole instructive history, and especially those actions of the Lord by which He accompanied the miracle, and by which He also intended to *speak* to the dumb.

He would not and He could not be concealed: the Father sends to Him everywhere, even on the confines of the heathen world, the poor and the miserable for His assistance. He is returning to Galilee, through the midst of the half-heathen Decapolis, still tarrying and turning aside by the way. It is not an individual case of the miracles mentioned in Matt. xv. 30, as the harmonists have been accustomed inaccurately to represent it (although afterwards Matt. ver. 31 may fall in with Mark ver. 37), but an earlier case which occurs by the way, that St Mark here details; who has preserved for us two cases of healing, here and in chap. viii. 22, connected together by very peculiar circumstances. The Septuagint, and in like manner Aquila, Symmachus, Theodotion, use μογιλάλος and ἄλαλος indifferently for אִלֵּם; see Ex. iv. 10, 11, Ps. xxxviii. 14, Is. xxxv. 6, lvi. 10: the enraptured song of the people after the event had taken place classes the μογιλάλος among the ἀλάλους. Yet it is evident from the history generally, and also from the ὀρθῶς of ver. 35, that the man was only a βραδύγλωσσος or ἀγκυλόγλωσσος (an old Lexicon has μογιλαλεῖν, βατταρίζειν), a אַפְקָא, a *stammerer*, as the literal Peshito has it. It was the case of a man whose malady is clearly distinguished both by the Lord and His Evangelist from possession, such, for example, as we find at Matt. xii. 22, Luke xi. 14. So much the more remarkable is the ceremoniously protracted operation of the Lord, instead of the customary laying on of hands, which is what He was here asked to do: He does not work the miracle for the sake of the people; He does not show His power in the manner prescribed by them, and which was the usual manner of healing. The miracle in this case is an act of kindness to the poor man; and the Lord in working it acts so as to awaken his faith, with a view to this bodily cure as well as to salvation of a better kind. O with what kindness does He still condescend to each one's peculiar necessity; and give us exceeding abundantly above all that we are able to ask or think! The

Hosted by Google

faith which He would awaken with a view to unloose the bands of the soul comes from hearing. But, because the poor man, whom our Lord designs not merely to restore thus suddenly to the perfect use of his bodily powers, but whose desire for blessing, and whose confidence in Him, He would also first excite so as to lead him to utter greater praise and thanks, is shut out from hearing. The Lord therefore *takes him apart*, and, having thus secured his undivided attention, speaks to him by signs. This is manifestly the special reason why on this occasion He envelopes the healing power in so many external actions, touching especially the ears and the tongue. Even the *spittle*—in this case as in that of the blind men, in chap. viii. 23, and in John ix. 6, —is really no medicinal application; but a symbol employed, with His other actions, to denote very significantly the energy proceeding from His person. Grotius remarks that He employs nothing except what comes from Himself; we are reminded of more than this, namely, of the streams of vital energy (so repeatedly referred to by the *physician* Luke) proceeding from His holy human body, as they operate at present in His glorified state, and as they then operated in combination with the might of the Father which at all times was His. Further, we are to regard the looking up to heaven as intended to indicate this last idea to the deaf man and to ourselves; so that we have here a parallel to John xi. 41. But the holy *sigh* (to the understanding of which, as Kleuker says, a verbal Exegesis is as little sufficient as is any system of Psychology with which we can be acquainted) was an utterance, proceeding from His Divine and human natures, and characteristic of His office as High Priest, —an expression of His sympathy with this and with every malady of sinful humanity, bodily and spiritual all in one; yea, with all trouble and sickness (which assuredly sin has brought in and still continues to bring in) felt by Him as near at hand, and represented by this dire calamity.[1] In contrast to those fools who fancy they have discovered in the narratives of healings peculiar to *St Mark* something which will enable them to account for miracles on rationalistic principles, the simple wisdom of

[1] Chrysostom to the like effect: "Pitying the nature of man, and the degradation to which he has been brought by the hater of all good, the Devil, and through the failure of our great Progenitors."

Hosted by Google

Luther may teach us what the exposition of a spirit of faith brings up from the depth at the right place. "It was not drawn from him on account of the single tongue and ears of this poor man; but it is a common sigh over all tongues and ears, yea, over all hearts, bodies, and souls, and over all men, from Adam to his last descendant. This Gospel thus paints Christ, that He who was man took such an interest in thee and in me, and in all of us, as we ought to take in ourselves, when He was involved in the sins and sufferings in which we are involved; and that He sighs over the very devil who has been the cause of the sorrow." Luther also, who on other occasions is hostile to all playing with allegory, admirably points out that this sympathetic sigh breaks out especially over the deaf and dumb, at least that it is on such an occasion that the Holy Ghost has recorded it. We hold also that there is good reason for supposing that it was exactly under this bodily emblem that there came up before the thoughts of the heart of the Saviour of men, on the one hand, compassion for spiritual blindness, from which proceeds also, as in the case before us, the incapacity of the tongue to speak and to praise God; and, on the other hand, the lamentable evils of tongue-sins all over the world. Luther renders prominent this latter point: "Our beloved Lord saw well what an amount of sufferings and sorrows would be occasioned by tongues and ears. For the greatest mischief which has been inflicted on Christianity has not arisen from tyrants (with persecutions, murders, and pride, against the word), but from that little piece of flesh, which abides between the jaws: it is it that inflicts the greatest injury upon the kingdom of God. I speak of this, that after Christ has loosed the tongue and given it the Gospel, it should inflict such extraordinary and great injuries. It is a dreadfully looking thing to take off a man's head; but a false sermon, yea, a false word which has gone forth in the name of Christ, takes off the heads of souls." Thus, according to this, Christ must have been thinking upon the injurious tongues, and also upon the shameful ears which will not hear anything else except such false injurious tongues. (2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.) We add to this: perhaps also, and in the first instance, He was thinking upon the sins which this man, on whose body this miracle of healing was wrought, would hereafter commit with his tongue and ears; and that it might

Hosted by Google

have been better for him not to have received the help which this Ephphatha brought. We believe that these and similar thoughts made up the hidden substance of this *Ephphatha, uttered in a sigh*, and hence we have given them as expository of it.[1] "Ah, that I, O My Father which art in heaven,—Thou knowest how these things are,—Ah, that I could *open* and unloose the ears and tongues of all men!"

The Ephphatha is the first word which the ears no longer deaf must hear. And what is the first word which the tongue loosed from its bands (its strings and feebleness, as in Luke xiii. 16) spoke! It is not recorded. Instead of it we have the *prohibition* to make known the miracle. Among the "them" whom our Saviour charged not to make it known is undoubtedly comprehended the man who was healed. Thus the gift of speech was scarcely given him, when silence was enjoined; in order that he, or at least we, might learn that right *hearing* consists in *obeying*, the right use of the unbound tongue consists in its willing bondage with a view to obedience.

THE GRADUAL HEALING OF THE BLIND MAN.

Mark viii. 23, 25, 26.

We have here a second narrative of healing by St Mark, containing a description of a particularly circumstantial procedure on the part of the Lord; and not certainly a mere specimen of what had happened on other occasions, though not recorded by the Evangelists, but with the clear and express stamp of distinctive truth. We still see how each Evangelist brings forward his peculiar gifts, supplementing and completing the scenes described by the others. This blind man was brought to the Lord at Bethsaida, the eastern town of that name, and which was also

[1] The tribute of praise in St Mark, ver. 37, uttered by the people, puts us in mind of Gen. i. 31, at the first creation; but if the people, when the Lord said "be thou opened," really thought of "let there be light" (as V. Gerlach supposes, though we are doubtful), they must have entirely misunderstood the meaning of the *sighing* cry.

Hosted by Google

called Julias. Our Lord treats him with a condescension similar to what He had shown to the deaf man on a former occasion; entering into His necessities and circumstances, of which, however, we know nothing more than what is here recorded. He also acts in the exercise of His wisdom according to His own discretion, differently from what He had been asked to do and from what would have been convenient for Himself: He not only touches his eyes as He had done on another occasion, Matt. ix. 29,[1] but takes pains to lead him away out from the crowd; which certainly is more than He did on the former occasion, ἀπολαβόμενος ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄχλου κατ' ἰδίαν. The immediate reason why He did so was to withdraw the man from the first effect of the gaze of the crowds; and to prepare for him a more blessed object for his first glance, under the free open canopy of heaven, as in John ix. 7. Then the slow gradual process of healing is remarkable; indicated by the question put after the first touching of the eyes[2] "*if he saw anything?*" There must have been in the condition of this man some special reason why he was brought thus step by step to the full light; and though we do not, in the case before us, see through this, yet we have here represented to us the long-suffering wisdom and gracious condescension with which our Lord must deal with by far the greater part of those who are spiritually blind. When He therefore puts to us the confiding question, let us not, when we are only beginning to see, and are seeing things as yet indistinctly, reply with a too proud, hasty, and full "yes;" but let us be as sincere as this man was. He saw figures which he recognised by their walking to be men; they appeared to him, moreover, to be as yet quite as indistinct as trees.[3] But now our Lord

[1] From this we see what as far as He Himself was concerned He *could* have done in all cases. But in every act of healing which He wrought He *sought* to include and use the advancing faith of the man, and to care for the necessities of the sick: and it is in this that we are to seek the true reason of the variety of procedure in different cases.

[2] St Mark gives in the first instance ὄμματα sight-organs, which in this strict sense corresponds to the ἀκοαί chap. vii. 35 (comp. Heb. v. 11); afterwards he employs the usual word ὀφθαλμούς.

[3] "The masses of people which they had left behind in the distance appeared to him like a dark forest; only the trees walked." Lange. He was *born* blind; therefore, of course, he knew nothing about trees.

Hosted by Google

lays His hands upon him the second time, and addresses to him a second friendly word, "Look up again"—or, "see now," in contrast to the former question, and announcing a complete recovery. For this probably is what St Mark means to say by his very curiously ambiguous phrase: ἐποιήσεν αὐτὸν ἀναβλέψαι. This might mean, "He gave him sight again," "He *made* him again see completely;" compare ἀναβλέπειν, chap. x. 51; Matt. xx. 33, 34, xi. 5, where, however, this sense is not probable. But, because this result is for the first time strongly announced in the following context, we should understand the expression in accordance with the whole history in the first mentioned sense: "He bids him look up" (even although we may not be able with Luther to see the "again");—compare ποιεῖν almost equivalent "to command," Luke v. 34. Finally, the general sense of the injunction not to go into the town, nor to spread abroad the report outside the house (see at chap. v. 19, Vol. i. p. 373); the intimation neither now nor at any future time to tell it to any one ἐν τῇ κώμῃ if he should have occasion to enter it; has already been ascertained when expounding similar sayings of frequent occurrence. It almost appears as if this Bethsaida, to which our Lord gives prominence by the repeated κώμη, was for some special reason not to be permitted to hear; perhaps this might be one reason why our Lord led the blind man out from the place. Last of all, that nothing whatever may be overlooked in St Mark, we may remark that the μηδέ is not altogether grammatically wrong, as Winer supposes, but stands instead of καὶ μή on account of the implied antithesis to "sending him to his own house."

THE TRUE GREATNESS OF THE DISCIPLES OF CHRIST; THE NOT FOLLOWING WITH US; THE FIRE AND SALT PREPARED FOR SELF-DENIAL.

Mark ix. 33–50. Luke ix. 48–50. [Matt. xviii. 3–20.]

We have already in our remarks on St Matthew considered all those parts of the passage before us which have parallels in that Gospel. A special consideration, however, of St Mark is

Hosted by Google

necessary: partly because he gives us, in common with St Luke, the remarkable interlude, ver. 38–41; and partly because he gives us, what no other Evangelist gives, the profound utterances about the worm and the fire, the fire and the salt, and in general has preserved a peculiar account of the sayings of our Lord spoken at this time,—concluding sooner, yet at the beginning preserving more of what was delivered. Referring to what has already been said on St Matthew, we must request the reader to take a fresh general survey; this will satisfy him that the theme and leading thoughts are essentially the same in this new account.

The true *greatness* of the disciples of the Lord among themselves *consists* in humility and love; and *is obtained* by self-denial. Thus St Mark elevates to the rank of a main section what in St Matthew, vers. 8, 9, came in only as a secondary thought; and then he leaves it. St Matthew, on the other hand, goes on to narrate what the Lord further said on the subject of the *foundation* on which this greatness rests through the grace of the Redeemer, and the *manifestation* which it shall assume in the community or church. It *consists* in humility and love! This position, this great fundamental principle of the kingdom, addressed solemnly to the twelve Apostles from the seat of teaching and of judgment, is uttered in the first instance in opposition to the proud φιλοπρωτεύειν of the disciples among each other. It is exhibited, first, by a most peculiar and decisive expression, ver. 35 (which we must regard as having been uttered *before* the third and fourth verses of the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, although the same in sense as these verses); and then by the *figure* of the little child brought in. Upon this, however, Mark, ver. 37, merely traces out the sentence parallel to that in Matt. ver. 5, with an addition repeated at an earlier period; for, from his efforts at brevity, he merely takes up the one saying, in which there are sufficiently indicated both the greatness graciously attributed by our Lord to the little ones, and also the duty on our part thence resulting of loving them. For this reason he gives the *extended account* of the statement which St Matthew omits; occasioned by the confession of the disciples that, acting under the influence of pride *towards others*, they had questioned a certain man, and their "we" had risen up in an

Hosted by Google

arrogant and exclusive spirit against other followers of the Lord. To this the Lord replies—"Without arrogance (which manifests itself in *forbidding*, in strong contrast to *assisting* or *acknowledging*) think the best of others; without seeking the honour that may arise from their externally following Me in your company! ver. 39, 40. Rather believe, and forget not, that even the smallest thing done on behalf of the kingdom of God is graciously recompensed by God! ver. 41." (Just as ver. 37 is repeated by our Lord from Matt., chap. x.; but here He will utter it in this connection, "Take care, only without boasting of it, that ye yourselves belong to Christ.") Finally, "Offend not one of those little ones, who believes in Me!" ver. 42. In this again St Mark concurs with St Matthew, ver. 6. See Vol. ii. page 402.

The true greatness of the disciples *is obtained*, and also secured or rendered permanent, by *self-denial*, by averting or destroying the real ground of offence. St Mark (passing over the other opposite in St Matthew, ver. 7) gives this as fully and literally as our Lord uttered it. *Hand*, *foot*, and *eye*, separated by the thrice repeated rigorous declaration—"It is better for thee now to put to death the offending sinful member than at a future time to fall into eternal death!" Vers. 43–48 is parallel to Matt. vers. 8, 9. It is only by a wholesome mortifying fire and salt that man escapes the unquenchable destroying fire; but the easiest and the best way is to use salt for self-denial. Ver. 49. "*Therefore* found upon such willing self-denial your true *dignity* before others (as salt of the earth, always itself first salted, *in humility*); and your *place* among yourselves (as messengers of peace to the world, united in love!)" ver. 50. This is a natural conclusion at which the Evangelist may well break off.

Ver. 35. This is one of our Lord's repeated sayings, which here agrees particularly well with the intimation of His sufferings given in ver. 31—"This is the very way in which I, your Master, go before you." Comparing Matt. xx. 26–28, xviii. 4; Luke ix. 48, xxii. 26, 27, we see that our Lord does *not* intend to say anything of a threatening nature—"Whoever will be the first shall be the last, as a punishment of his pride!" This statement—generally elsewhere true as given in Matt. xix. 30—is in this passage blunted and turned aside by the humility in the ex-

Hosted by Google

ercise of which a man willingly humbles himself as the ἔσχατος in order to his becoming really the πρῶτος; the addition of the word διάκονος in this verse, as well as the whole connection in St Matthew, shows that this is the sense meant to be conveyed. Whoever in *humility* looks upon himself as the last, will be found ready to devote himself in love to others, as their servant in helping and in serving them. Let him who desires great things seek true greatness in denying himself; in giving himself up entirely to that love of the Master which will lead him to serve Him, to realise Him, to work in His strength. The ἔσται signifies, first, Whosoever φιλοπρωτεύει, in the true and right sense, will forthwith show it when put to the test: it goes, however, beyond this and becomes a hortatory imperative. If we take the θέλειν πρῶτος εἶναι in the good, praiseworthy, and therefore commanded sense, there remains of course the simple, strong key-note of the saying. Still, we should not be averse to apply, even in different ways, these antithetic sentences of our Lord's, constructed as they are, with such admirable simplicity. Thus, for example, we may understand the one before us, as the words admit—"Whosoever cannot but observe within himself the (natural, and false) desire of pre-eminence (φιλοπρωτεύειν), let him humble himself on this very account; let him acknowledge that on account of the desire to be the first which is deeply fixed in his heart, he is really the last;—*therefore*, for the very purpose of impressing this on the contrary upon himself, with a view to wholesome resignation and self-denial, let him become externally, as is right he should, the servant of all!"

Ver. 37. This saying, with which St Luke begins, ver. 48, and whose abbreviated form is found in Matt. ver. 5, is repeated here entire from Matt. x. 40. It appears, therefore, that the promise there applied to the Twelve with special honour, is now extended in similar terms to the very smallest child: this is precisely the meaning and the design of its repetition in this place! "Do not suppose it is applicable to *you* alone, or even to you chiefly: I declare it to be the Father's will that every one of those little ones in whom not only I begin with My whole grace to dwell and to work, but also the Father, who is in Me and one with Me, shall be received and acknowledged; not de-

Hosted by Google

spised or offended, but humbly honoured and served, as much as the greatest."

It is very natural that John should have felt himself impelled to make a confession, somewhat as if he were putting a question, in regard to an act of injury which had taken place in violation of this statement. The proud heart might have been too ready, as the disciples hitherto had been, to appropriate exclusively to itself such great promises, and to conclude, "*We* ought therefore to be received for His name's sake which we acknowledge and bear upon us." But the word of the Lord, "one such little child," gives rise to the counter-question, "Shall we really thus esteem and receive *every other man*, on whom we find Thy name? Has, then, every one who chooses to own and to use Thy name a right forthwith to do so, without first becoming connected with us?"[1] The "I" which broke out in the contest of the disciples among themselves about pre-eminence, has no sooner been dismissed, than it immediately returns, at least in the shape of a common "We" of the disciples set up against others. *John* does not mean to take upon himself exclusively the blame of the κωλύειν: hence we cannot reasonably find here an expression indicating any highly impulsive character peculiarly belonging to him, such as we have in Luke ix. 54.[2] John, *by this*, rather shows that he had felt our Lord's remark (rather than Peter, who not apprehending so promptly the meaning of the sayings about humility, laid them up in his heart). Under this feeling he begins in the name of all to ask and to confess, "Was then what we did *not right?*" It is only in this way that we can understand the interjected ἀποκρίνεσθαι; it is exactly because it is used of John that we cannot suppose him to have said nor to have asserted, "Was not this certainly right?" Nor can we

[1] This is quite a correct connection. There is, therefore, no vestige whatever of what Neander supposes; viz., that John, from misconception, without understanding the proper sense of the expression, took a strange view of the words "in My name." The want of understanding is in this case rather in the expositor.

[2] Niemeyer's *Characteristik*, for example, generally rather peculiar, says, with half truth, "A noble soul is commonly at first intolerant." Braune has a more correct and finer observation, "John was, perhaps, in the least degree too quick in forbidding; but he soon repented of it in his heart, and was not long of feeling the guilt of the deed."

Hosted by Google

suppose, as some have done with extreme perversity, that we have here an example of arrogance of spirit aptly condemned. In the honest narratives of the transactions of this period, there is to be noticed the echo of the tone and feeling which prevailed at the time: εἴδομέν τινα, looking down upon him somewhat slightingly. This "somebody" perhaps one of John's disciples who had not yet begun externally to follow Jesus; or perhaps even a believer who took the liberty of pursuing his own separate path, but had in reality cast out devils in the name of Jesus (more than one devil, Luke expressly τὰ δαιμόνια); and had not merely "made the attempt to do so," was not such a one as the sons of Sceva (Acts xix. 13), but one who *could do* more with his faith, which was by no means feeble, than the disciples themselves (Mark ix. 28) were able to accomplish. Perhaps they felt annoyed at this, if the event happened at a later period. Enough, they forbade him; and why? *He follows not us.* O! how often even till the present day have Christians had nothing more to object to their fellow-Christians than this! In St Luke the expression appears somewhat softened: οὐκ ἀκολουθεῖ μεθ' ἡμῶν; that is, He followeth not *Thee* with us,[1] in our company. Still, this may be the Greek construction of ἀκολουθεῖν with μετά (of which *Pricaeus* has given examples), as in Rev. xiv. 13. We prefer taking this view, because in this case the reply of our Lord οὐ καθ' ὑμῶν comes in with effect. Then, also, in the exact version of St Mark—"he followeth not us,"—there is a sharp, self-condemning, self-convicting expression of that proud imagination in which the "We and us" almost forgets the Lord Himself; in which *they* intrude into the place of Him, to follow whom is and must ever be the great concern.

Vers. 39, 40. The humble and timid question, which the disciples could scarcely venture to utter, is abruptly and decisively responded to by the instructive answer of our Lord, which, taking the particular case by the roots, gives forth a general and deeply impressive utterance, and one which it becomes our own age (as Braune well remarks) to lay particularly to heart. The confessed prohibition He prohibits in turn; and then in a condescending manner assigns His reason for doing so. "Never for-

[1] The Syriac Version supplies עמן בתרך, and we also, Vol. ii. p. 155, adopted for the time this view.

Hosted by Google

bid after this the casting out of devils in My name, either to one man or another in a similar case:" the *αὐτόν* thus brings out the indefinite *τινά*,—so that "any one who may do so" is meant:—the futures with *οὐδεὶς γάρ* indicate the same thing. In former times, Num. xi. 26–29, Joshua would have forbidden the two men, Eldad and Medad, when they prophesied in the camp, the Spirit of God being upon them, on the ground that in regard to external arrangement they were not connected with the others; but he did not know that they were accepted before God, and that they had only not gone out with the others to the tabernacle. Moses even in that age did not regard their formal defect, proceeding apparently from an innocent mistake, as a reason for depriving them of the Spirit which had been bestowed upon them (supposing this in his power!), but, on the contrary, gave expression to the large-hearted wish, that the whole people of the Lord might prophesy; and most assuredly there can be no such thing now, under the grace of the New Testament, which works at large and unconstrained, as a confining of the Spirit of the Lord to this or to that place, to the communion of this or of that party. The Spirit bloweth where He listeth: where is the man who will or can hinder Him? Wherever devils are cast out, there is the Spirit of God, Matt. xii. 27, 28; wherever the name of Jesus is confessed, the confessor of that name is accepted before God, whether he stand in our roll or not. This, at least, is the view which our Lord, in the first instance, teaches us to take of this incident, in so far as our *own* knowledge and conduct are concerned. He extends the special case of casting out devils to the general idea of *ποιεῖν δύναμιν*, working a miracle, *i.e.*, effecting or performing anything, in His name; and thus, in condemning the disciples, negatives the manifest *conclusion* to which they had been brought. Anticipating a case which might occur, He says, graciously and convincingly—"Whosoever uses My name for a good work, so that virtue and the Spirit are manifest, will not be *able* forthwith, *shortly thereafter*, to reproach or revile Me, as for example to attribute My own casting out of devils to Beelzebub." For, as John von Muller says, "he will be convinced by it," viz., that there resides in My name an effective power of truth. Or he will not probably prove such an inconsistent and perverse man as *ταχὺ*,

Hosted by Google

forthwith, almost in the same moment, to revile Him whose name he himself had used with such effect. Compare the expression of the Apostle, 1 Cor. xii. 3, which may be understood as meaning that to confess Jesus as Lord, with the powerful conviction inwrought by the Spirit, and at the same time to curse Him, cannot coexist in the same individual. But how now? Are there really none who call Jesus Lord, and yet not in the power of the Holy Ghost? Were there really no hypocritical miscreants who yet cast out devils and removed mountains? (Matt. vii. 22, 23; 1 Cor. xiii. 2.) Assuredly nowhere do we find it asserted that the working of many miracles (*ποιεῖν δυνάμεις πολλάς*) is a sure proof of real communion with Jesus. We remark that in the *ταχύ* there lies concealed something like this, "ye should wait a little before ye judge and forbid." Is there then really *no one* who may unwarrantably perform deeds in the name of the Lord? Certainly; but to know such is reserved for the Searcher of hearts, or for us after successive manifest evidences of hostility towards the Lord. We observe, therefore, that the Lord can mean by the general statement which He appears to lay down without any exception only this—"*It becomes you thus to think;* ye ought, in every case, in the first instance, lovingly and humbly to assume it to be so, so long as ye see nothing else than what ye tell Me, a good effect resulting from the use of My name against the kingdom of the wicked one, in the confession and conduct of any one." That this is the proper sense becomes still more evident in the following verse, which certainly rejects the *οὐκ ἀκολουθεῖ ἡμῖν* as an insufficient reason. This following statement can by no means be regarded as unconditionally true in all cases, any more than the preceding one; for many may take the name of Christ into their lips, may preach His Gospel *ἐξ ἐριθείας* and *προφάσει*, Phil. i. 16–18. But the great Apostle, when he leaves in the background the *εἴτε προφάσει εἴτε ἀληθείᾳ*, and that in a case which left little room for doubt,—when he suffers not his joy at the preaching of Christ to be disturbed by the hostility manifested against himself,—speaks and acts in the spirit of the Lord's statement now before us, which dictates to us nothing but the modest *presumption* of good in others with which it is proper for us to act.

Ver. 40. We remark, by way of introduction, that the read-

Hosted by Google

ing ὑμῶν instead of ἡμῶν in St Mark is undoubtedly the correct one, and that both on internal and external grounds. This passage is one of those which show clearly the necessity of a revision of Luther's Bible; for the "us," put here into the mouth of our Lord, disturbs and almost destroys the whole sense of His most important saying. The fault of the disciples is exactly this, that they presume to set up an externally visible communion with themselves, instead of communion with the Lord, as a mark by which to judge a man; and the exact way in which our Lord expresses His disapprobation of this is by employing a "You," sharply turning away the case from Himself, so as to form the counterpart to their proud "We." Ye need not at once conclude that whoever is not with you is against you; ye should rather take it for granted until something to the contrary appears that he is for you. Moreover, there would be room for many mistakes if the expressions "against *you*," or even "not with you," were made a test;—but "to be also not with Me," that is, "against Me," is an unerring test. We may look back upon the other correlative saying, Matt. xii. 30 (Luke xi. 23): "He cannot and He will not so bind Himself up with His people, not even on any one occasion with His Apostles, as to sanction the maxim of man's judgment, *no salvation without our Church, or our communion;* He lays down the 'YOU' in strict opposition to this." Let this be repeated from Vol. ii. p. 155. Our Lord, on one occasion, says, "*Our* friend Lazarus," Jo. xi. 11; "that *we* may not give offence," Matt. xvii. 27; and on one single occasion, with a far reaching sense, "thus it becometh *Us* to fulfil all righteousness," Matt. iii. 15. But this is the whole: everywhere He discriminates exactly, and uses the "*we*" only in connection with outward circumstances. Here, at least, it was impossible for Him to say "We;" for it is exactly in opposition to the presumption and rash judgment of the disciples that He is constrained to discriminate between communion with Him, which in most cases can be known for certain only by Himself, and communion with them. Olshausen fails to perceive the exact meaning of the saying, inasmuch as he applies to different persons the two sayings which are meant mutually to supplement and limit each other: "He who has been called to spiritual service must be against the Lord and His cause if he is not engaged in positively

Hosted by Google

promoting it; but he who has been called to less than this, yea, he who stands dependent spiritually upon his superiors, is reckoned as on the side of the cause of God, if he only keeps himself free from the wide-spread hostile influences that are around him." For the "whosoever" in *both* sayings lays down a rule which is entirely general; to discriminate the sphere of its operation on both sides must be effected in another way. Every one, as we have remarked on Matt. xii. 30, is called to spiritual work of some kind or other; but it is not always necessary for him to proceed according to the form and manner of this or of that community of the called.

The well-known treatise of Elvert *(Studien d. Evang. Geistl. Würtembergs)*, has in like manner entirely failed to bring out the sense; the author supposes the great difference between the two sayings to lie in the μετά τινος and the ὑπέρ τινος εἶναι, the former according to him denoting inward unity of heart, and the latter outward community and operation. We might as well on the contrary take μετά as denoting mere companionship and expressed co-operation (as this undeniably is its ordinary use), and ὑπέρ, on the other hand, internal relationship. For that ὑπέρ literally denotes by itself a relation of working, of acting in favour or in behalf of another, is an entirely groundless assertion, although Ullmann repeats it (in the treatise hereafter to be named). At all events the ὑπέρ τινος εἶναι does not point to work, but to internal condition and feeling.

In the second saying, Mark ix. and Luke ix., as far as regards its commencing clause, or the οὐκ ἔστι καθ' ὑμῶν, it is certain that our Lord is not speaking immediately of the state of mind or internal relation to the followers of Christ, and consequently to Christ Himself; though we cannot, consistently with truth, affirm with Elvert that the whole statement has nothing whatever to do with this internal relation. For how can the words "is for you," merely mean "he is serving your cause," "promoting your objects?" It is certainly not to be supposed that the Apostles had a cause other than that of Christ, an object different from what He had; Elvert himself acknowledges "that the cause of the Apostles is here to be regarded as identical with that of Christ." When our Lord, in the first saying, proceeds to remark, "whoever gathers not with Me scatters abroad" (this certainly refers to *work*), He

Hosted by Google

asserts the inseparable connection between inward state and outward work, as we have explained the passage.[1] According to this clear statement we must deny that the "undecided" may in the very least "be profitable to the cause of Christ."

The contrast of both sayings, lies, therefore, manifestly in something altogether different. First and foremost in this, that in the one case, the Lord says "against *Me*," and in the other case, "against *you*." How can any one overlook this? Assuredly in relation to the *person of Christ*, there can be no μετά of mere external communion, least of all in the intention, since He is here speaking as the Searcher of hearts and the Judge of hearts, not only about temporal relations, but also in regard to all future time, and in reference to both kingdoms. In the second saying He adds this: "To be *with Me* must not be supposed necessarily the same as to be *with you*, in a manner that shall be visible and subject to your judgment." For, in the second place, there is the clear difference: Christ, the Searcher of hearts, pronounces a decisive judgment, makes it manifest to the heart of each; but in our case, where no such judgment can exist, all that is required in the ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ἐστιν is manifestly a kind assumption, a taking for granted in the meantime. "Let such a one be to you as if he were for you (and for Me),—until something occurs which proves him to be the reverse. Speak thus of him."

Elvert, without any reason, introduces into the case the very questionable position "*that absolute decision for Christ may not strictly be assumed of any one*,"—that to demand this "in order to a work rich in blessing" will in the end "destroy the Church itself and all activity in it on behalf of Christ." For such an assertion is exactly the opposite of the first saying in Matt. xii. 30. What in this is relatively true, will always, at the same time, have an influence upon practice; thus the meaning to the Apostles might have been,—"In so far as any one is still undecided, in so far he acts against your cause and Mine." But to

[1] Elvert's evasion is very rash: "The gathering and the scattering is only a continuation, in the form of a proverbial saying, of what had been formerly affirmed, and the words are not to be taken literally!" The acknowledgment betrays sadly his own want of understanding; in any other case there would be no possibility of comparing the two sayings!!

Hosted by Google

understand our Lord as saying, "Whosoever is only not absolutely against Me may, with some degree of blessing, work on My behalf,"[1] is the very thing which the former statement has sharply and unquestionably denied.

Christ in the second statement refers not *merely* to the toleration, so dear to some, of imperfection and half decision (this *in us* may be appropriate),—not at all of blessing in the objective power of the means of salvation irrespective of the personal character of him who administers them, etc. These are matters irrelevant to the subject on hand. But He testifies in the verbally clear contrast of the two sayings:—that communion of being and of working with Him (these two are inseparable, and both are imperatively necessary) is not altogether bound up with the communion of external fellowship, association, participation with His people. There is here a contrast; but there is no contradiction. We see scarcely an appearance of contradiction in the two sayings as soon as we take them in their proper literal sense, without turning aside to general, irrelevant thoughts.

We do not therefore understand how Ullmann can set out with the assumption of a contradiction to be solved—as he has done recently in a treatise *on the supposed problem (Deutsche Zeitschr. für Christl. Wissensch.* u. s. w. 1851. No. 3, 4).[2] Even he finds first and foremost in the second saying the proposition "that every one who is only not against Christ is for Him,"—a proposition which neither was nor *could be* uttered. Even he appears not to observe that Elvert's result is an entire misinterpretation, and endeavours to find in the difference of the prepositions μετά and ὑπέρ (a difference of little moment in this passage), a false key. In the end, however, he comes to a

[1] As Elvert, p. 128, understands the second saying, and pays no attention to the fact that the expression is not ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ in this case. This certainly is not to notice the chief point.

[2] We still less understand the praise there (p. 22) bestowed upon the totally useless treatise of Elvert. But certainly exposition, proceeding strictly from the word, is so little a matter of concern with these systematic and historic theologians, that even Ullmann himself *begins* with the commentators in expounding his views:—some take this, and others take that, as the object of the saying. Oh that our interpreters would first of all read and reflect upon the text and its connection! I read *it* first myself, and then consult the commentaries.

Hosted by Google

right conclusion, as we have already seen he did once before,—that in the second saying our "Lord does not so much speak about the relation to Himself as about the relation of fellowship with His disciples." Our view, on the other hand, is that the contrast and difference are clear without any "not so much" of qualification. What Ullmann regards merely as a secondary difference we regard as the first, the very decisive, and assuredly the only one,—"that in the more severe saying our Lord speaks in the singular and in the first person, and, therefore, only of Himself, of His own person; but in the milder saying, on the other hand, in the plural and in the second person, and, therefore, of the disciples and of fellowship with them." This we thought we had set forth long since in our exposition, and that we had deduced everything which rightly flows from it: that it is not in the state of the soul and conscience towards Christ that the fundamental difference is to be explained; there, there is an absolute "either—or" as to being on the side of Christ, as to working with Him, as to being united with Him; this internal relation, however, always remains in some respects not perfectly cognisable to human eye and judgment. No Christian community, therefore, no visible Church, however constituted, may adopt the fault of Roman Catholicism and say that there is no communion with Christ and His people except in it.

We earnestly beg the reader's pardon for this digression on the exegetical literature of the day; we have been led into it by a desire to indicate once for all, on some prominent passage, the relation in which we stand to it. We return from this digression to our usual course, and observe in conclusion, that we must mark, consider, examine the immediate occasion and cause of the action and word of the Apostle John, in order rightly to understand the reply and the rule here given by Christ! The faithful and wise Teacher lays hold of this individual case in its deep general significance and symbolical import; He sees here all Popery in the widest sense of the word in its kernel, rising in the assuming WE of His beloved Apostles; and therefore He decidedly rejects and condemns it for all time to come. His word rebukes the smallest beginnings of assumption, as well as its full development in the "Church which alone confers salvation;" it protests against all restraining

Hosted by Google

and quenching of the Spirit with rules, forms, and pretensions which have their origin in "Us," against all binding of the gifts of grace to any communion or succession, against all narrow-mindedness of confession, system, and method. Our Lord is most assuredly a God of order in His Church; and inculcates upon His people, *as the rule*, fellowship with each other, and, as far as possible, exact uniformity. But inasmuch as His people are very much inclined to misunderstand this order, and to substitute, first, the best form, and also by degrees some other form, instead of the internal reality;—for this very reason *His spirit makes exceptions*, and He Himself *gives us in this passage the rule* for these exceptions in the last extremity, as well as for a whole wide field of human assumption which will quickly see unjustifiable exceptions. Oh how far and deeply does His brief master-saying penetrate, if only the hearts of His disciples were willing to receive it! "Bind no man so to your doctrine as that ye shall say, He speaks not as we speak, therefore we regard it not though he also as well as we owns and praises our Lord. Bind not the people to your ways,—Whosoever does not as we do, does not right. Finally, never in this, or in any other sense, bind any one to your communion unconditionally,—Whosoever does not adhere to us does not follow us, is regarded by us as one who is not a follower of the Lord." Our Lord speaks on this subject in the spirit of kind concession, because He has the Apostles in His presence:[1] in *our case* there may be very good reason for a man being *against* us and yet no opponent of the Lord; it may rather be in obedience to the Lord's will that he is opposing what is faulty in us. But, finally, even where an organization among ourselves may be compared to the circle of the Apostles, the rule of the Master remains in its integrity. Peter, John, and James, durst not have said to Paul, "Thou mayest not preach the name of Jesus, we know He hath not called thee," even though Paul had inquired after them still less than he did, and had carefully avoided altogether their communion.

Vers. 41, 42. In these verses St Mark again turns into the train of thought in St Matthew: first, a further retrospect to-

[1] Because of course it was said of them in a correct sense, Whoever is really *against you* is also against Me. Luke x. 16.

Hosted by Google

wards those sayings, Matt. x. 40–42; and secondly, in opposition, the warning against giving offence, the ground and meaning of which we have already set forth in our exposition of St Matthew. The correct reading is undoubtedly ἐν ὀνόματι ὅτι χριστοῦ ἐστε,—although this form, common at a later period in the writings of St Paul, occurs nowhere in the four Gospels except in the passage before us. The expressions of the Lord alternate between kindness and severity, between promise and warning. Scarcely has the Saviour expressed disapprobation of the assumption of the disciples, who would not acknowledge as a follower the man who followed not them, than He begins again to assure them of the dignity and honour which still remained for them in the presence of the Lord (assuredly here, according to ver. 37, common to them with every little child), and scarcely is this said to them than they are again impressively exhorted to avoid on their part offending any little one. For, that in the kingdom of heaven we should be loving children, honouring one another reciprocally and equally, is, as we have already seen on St Matthew, the fundamental thought of the whole of this saying of the Lord.

Vers. 43–48. St Mark does not give here, "according to his usual way," a paraphrastic version. What St Matthew has drawn in brief stands here in its original fulness. It is not to be imagined that the strong, thrice-repeated, astounding expression concerning the worm and the fire had its origin anywhere else than in the lips of our Lord Himself; and here as the natural sequence of this expression, we find a corresponding threefold word concerning the hand, and foot, and eye. The import of the saying we have already expounded in the Sermon on the Mount, and afterwards at Matt. xviii.; we may here notice the very regular distribution of the particular expressions so as to produce a significant variety in the repetition. To go "into life," "*to enter* into life," "to enter into *the kingdom of God*," —this is the one series, over against which is the alternates and counterpart "*to go away* into hell," "into fire unquenchable," "to be cast *into hell fire*." This is not a wide and empty fulness of words, but a solemn and emphatic address which presents to the mind at each turn a new view of the important matter. Πῦρ ἄσβεστον does not refer to the language of John the Baptist;

Hosted by Google

but is an original application of the terrific threefold warning quoted in the following clause from Isaiah, a quotation which St Mark alone gives us. The excellent J. F. v. Meyer—a man too little known in the theological world, and whose grateful scholar I shall ever with pleasure acknowledge myself, without, however, adopting from him what I regard as erroneous, and in whose doctrine, particularly of the final quenching of the fire, I can never sympathise—threw out on one occasion, referring in a letter to this passage, the brief expression, in opposition to my views:—"thrice is less than once." This expression, if I understand anything at all, can only mean that a proverbial saying is not to be interpreted too strictly in a doctrinal matter. There would be some truth in this, were it the case that our Lord was uttering a mere proverbial saying; not, however, to the extent of enfeebling the essential fundamental thought. Our Lord, however, is quoting *a passage of Scripture* (which had certainly become a proverbial saying in Israel) as is manifest from the αὐτῶν quoted literally from Is. lxvi. 24, and the use of which had not been occasioned by anything hitherto said. Nay more, *He strengthens* the expression there to a certain extent by the simple finally decisive οὐ τελευτᾷ, οὐ σβέννυται instead of the future in Isaiah οὐ τελευτήσει, οὐ σβεσθήσεται; in like manner by leaving out the second αὐτῶν, whereby, as absolutely confirming the ἄσβεστον, there remains the pure, plain expression τὸ πῦρ οὐ σβέννυται! We dare set nothing over against this, we dare not consider it as an indefinite Old Testament expression, such as we have in 2 Kings xxii. 17; Is. i. 31, xxxiv. 10, and in similar passages; but as a clause expressing the full truth corresponding to such typical passages as those which stand (Rev. xiv. 11, xx. 10) at the end of the New Testament and of the whole sacred volume. Least of all is it conceivable by us how "death itself can, shall, and must die of its own sting, and hell of its own pestilence."

We have already seen how thoroughly the Lord, when quoting passages especially from Isaiah, opens up their depth of meaning. We have here a new proof of this. There (chap. lxvi. 22) the eternal existence and endurance of the seed and name of the righteous before God in the new heavens and the new earth had been dwelt on in the preceding clauses: corre-

Hosted by Google

sponding to this we have here (ver. 24) the perpetuity of the dishonour and shame and suffering and pain of the condemned. Over this there may be thrown there a certain drapery of figurative language; here our Lord brings forward the real truth in the most unfigurative language,—the same Lord who, in Matt. xiii. 30, 40–42, knew no other way of explaining the figurative fire except by the literal fire. What Judith, with Jewish pride (xvi. 20, 21), addresses merely to the heathen, who torment the people of God, and Sirach vii. 17 (Luth. ver. 19) to all the ungodly in general,—our Lord here, though He is in the very midst of a most friendly address, in which He accommodates Himself graciously to little ones and children, threatens to these His own ransomed, beloved, blessed little children, if they will not perfect holiness by self-denial and the mortification of their own sin. *The worm* (in the first instance emphatic instead of worms) denotes here the internal corruption proceeding from death itself; see Job xvii. 14, xxi. 26; Is. xiv. 11; Sir. x. 11; the *fire*, the destruction of a corpse, anticipating the worm, and proceeding from without, such as took place in the valley of Hinnom, and not a mere reference to the custom of burning instead of burying:—this is the idea which gave rise to the expression in Isaiah, where mention is made of the *carcases* of the people who had sinned against the Lord. Whatever is represented as pictorially horrible in bodily death is wrought up into an inconceivable figure, and predicated of the peculiar horror of the second and eternal death. The word of prophecy here announces that both the *worm* and the *fire* are together; although in the imperfect figure it is only the one *or* the other that can exist, because the one excludes the other. And what in the case of the undying death is the import of the one and the other in their duality? Even those come short of the right sense who understand by the worm the gnawings of conscience in the soul, and by the fire the burning pain of the body; because *both* are applied in Isaiah to the body, as they are here in the mouth of the Lord to the body of sin and death with its unmortified members. In the resurrection, the whole is indissolubly reunited: body and soul enjoy together the bliss of life, or experience together the pain of death. The worm, therefore, rather denotes the self-corruption, the self-infliction of the man who has

Hosted by Google

been doomed to death; and the fire the effect, corresponding to this, of the righteousness and holiness of the living God. But this consuming fire cannot annihilate the worm; the worm cannot die by being consumed, so that the fire, finding nothing more to prey on, should be quenched.[1] These are hard, terrible secrets: May grace save us from understanding them in the depths of Satan, Rev. ii. 24. The expositor can only intimate that they are set forth in plain and certain words.

Ver. 49. We have again an extremely simple and plain statement, if we consider it in regard to its literal import. To grasp its meaning, however, in the connection in which it occurs, is one of the most difficult efforts which exegesis ever made,—an effort which can succeed only by a profound insight into those fundamental ideas which are peculiarly biblical, and by renouncing every ἰδία ἐπίλυσις of the sacred Word. We begin to spell out the passage with πᾶς, and inquire who is meant by it. It has been correctly observed that the masculine πᾶς is always connected with something understood which limits or defines its general character. What is this here? Erasmus translated "*omnis homo sicut omnis victima*" (*every man as every victim*). It is soon seen, however, that this is too wide a grasp. For, in this case, to "be salted with fire," must denote, or at least include, the pain of eternal fire. We learn, however, from the second clause as well as from the following verse, that in reality the salting must denote the opposite of the consuming, agonizing burning; if indeed this is not apparent in these two words themselves. We include here, as it is proper we should, the γάρ, which certainly belongs not to the immediately preceding sentence, but to the entire threefold exhortation,—Cut it off and pluck it out, *for* it is *better for thee!* This "*for*" introduces the strong, clear, and urgent consideration, "Let not this trouble and terrify you, for there is no other way; we must be prepared by fire and salt for God as a sacrifice,—that is, if we would escape eternal fire." Therefore, *Every man* who would not come into Gehenna, but would obtain the *better part.* Not, as many think (that we may guard against misunderstandings

[1] Even the excellent Roos gives us this most arbitrary interpretation:—"Where the worm of the damned dieth not *until* it hath totally consumed them; and the fire is not quenched *until* it hath totally destroyed them."

Hosted by Google

beforehand)—Every one who will not be salted by willing resignation and self-denial, must sink into the fire! For, as was said, the salting fire, in common with the salt, denotes the opposite of the πῦρ ἄσβεστον. "To salt," does not signify "to destroy;" but, "to preserve," "to render durable and acceptable." Although that fire assuredly never completes its work of destruction, yet this is alone what, as pure fire, its object is; and that those who burn in it are never consumed by it, but unceasingly endure it, does not arise from the fire, but from the undying worm. Our Lord does not institute any comparison between those who are condemned in fire and the burnt-offerings; or between those who are sanctified and the meat-offerings;—as we shall see if we read and spell on without bringing to the passage any new idea of our own. Πᾶσα θυσία is strictly parallel with πᾶς; and the θυσία, according to the passage quoted from the law, means not merely the מִנְחָה: the "and" between the two clauses is manifestly also, indeed properly speaking exactly equivalent to, "as;"[1] for, whatever is salted with the salt of the covenant (and this might be done with fire or merely with salt), is certainly an acceptable *offering*.

The Lord has a little before quoted a passage of Scripture which rests upon a similitude from nature; He now quotes, in the literal ἁλὶ ἁλισθήσεται, the passage from the Mosaic law of sacrifices, Lev. ii. 13, but gives to this ordinance a sense, in the connection in which it occurs in His discourse, which unfolds its typical import. The future intimates that the ordinance is to be retained and perpetuated in New Testament times. Dost thou ask, as a theologian, where Christ has taught and established a system of typology? Thou hast here the indisputably clear axiomatic utterance of His mouth, in which He deliberately takes for granted an essentially valid sense, not merely for this particular passage, but of course for the whole ceremonial law in which it occurs. We cannot certainly write a book within a book upon the whole typological system of the Levitical sacrifices; still the main features of this system may be briefly indicated. First, as to the *burnt-offering* to which the fire in this passage points us—What is shown, what is meant by the fire in which

[1] The so-called ו *exæquationis;* thus both Fritzsche and de Wette regard it here.

Hosted by Google

the sacrifice was consumed and ascended to God? Bähr[1] has recently repudiated very decidedly the old view according to which there was nothing in this fire except the hell fire of eternal condemnation. Kurtz,[2] also, who generally opposes him, is not disposed to acknowledge this fire as anything but the emblem of purification and holiness: agreeing with Bähr, he finds an irrefragable proof of this "in the similar and simultaneous burning of the meat-offering with the sacred incense, oil, and salt." We are not disposed altogether to resist these considerations to the extent of renewing the old limited view; as little, however, can we altogether agree with them. For, although it be admitted, on the one side, that the fire as a sweet-smelling savour of the Lord must indicate a reconciliation to His good pleasure—*i.e.*, the offering was accepted by God as an offering of propitiation; and grace and not wrath was manifested in this, that "the Lord has His fire in Sion and His furnace in Jerusalem" (Is. xxxi. 9) —still, on the other hand, it must be maintained, as Kurtz at least knew well, that in this reconciliation the punishment was inflicted upon the victim offered in sacrifice,—the avenging sentence of the merited death and destruction. And this, in our opinion, lies not merely in the preceding slaughter and shedding of blood, but quite as much in the consuming fire; just as the putting to death contains in it a returning to life in order to pleasing God, an offering presented as if it were something *living in death*. The burnt-offering is in the first instance Christ, and in the second place we in Him. Now, therefore, exactly in so far as the wrath of God, and death as the wages of sin, have to do with the death of Christ, who yet is life, and gives us life, to the same extent, and neither more nor less, does the *eternal* fire belong to the fire of the altar of burnt-offering. Of this fire, not without the most significant connection with that of which our Lord has spoken, it is written, "the fire on the altar shall burn, and shall never be put out; eternally shall the fire burn upon the altar, and shall never be put out" (Lev. vi.

[1] Whose well meant purpose to consider the *symbol* as such, without regard to the *type*, is impracticable, and must, therefore, necessarily involve him in many errors. We cannot thus separate what God has joined together!

[2] In his important treatise on the Mosaic sacrifices. *Mitau.* 1842.

Hosted by Google

12, 13). Compare for the individual offering, ver. 9. Here both are embraced in one: the warning allusion to the fire which consumes in righteous wrath; together with the reconciling grace which converts this same fire of holy love, into which we must all enter in fellowship with the Saviour given for us, from a destroying into a quickening fire, into a propitiation. The fire assuredly is, in reality, only one, and of one kind. Kurtz speaks in the first place of light and warmth; in the second place of a *quickening*, and therefore of a *purifying* efficacy; and in the third place of death bringing *destruction* as what is yet to come (p. 89, 90). This connection is correct; but the order must be reversed. In the first instance, as is clear in nature and Scripture, fire consumes; and if there were no sin in us the light of God would never be fire to us. It purifies and quickens us only in so far as it condemns and casts out sin, puts death itself to death, Is. iv. 4.[1] *Wherefore*, also, in the unburnt meat-offering which denotes the new life, praise, and obedience, there is at least an intimation of the *fire* in the salt; as the salt, on the other hand, is seen in the sin-offering and trespass-offering, as confirming the covenant, and preserving before God.

We have now reached the very heart of the matter; and may understand the expression before us, in which our Lord designs not merely to point us to a single isolated precept, but to give us a key to the centre of the whole sacrificial system. He speaks at once of the fire and the salt of the sacrifices; embraces both in one by the one word ἁλισθήσεται, which He applies to both. "Fire is salt and salt is fire"—says Stilling.[2] "The salt is a condensed embodiment of fire"—writes v. Meyer.[3] We have here, however, a solution not only of the apparent but of the real opposition; sacrificial symbolism supplies us with the key. The same fire of the Divine purity, holiness, and love, which

[1] It by no means follows, however, as V. Meyer once wrote to me, "that the eternal fire consumes only sin, that being what is represented by the animal sacrifices;" for the question is, Can sin in any case be separated from the sinner in the way of judgment, destruction, without faith in grace?

[2] Hence at the highest point the two appear once in complete unity (Deut. xxix. 23).

[3] "The nature of salt is of itself fiery," says Pliny (Nat. Hist. 31).

Hosted by Google

must, in the future state, unquenchably burn the unclean, the impure, and the dead in eternal destruction, must, at least in this world, *salt* every one who would come into contact with it, must sanctify him by putting to death everything within him that is worthy of death, by a gracious, condemning, purifying destruction of the sin, accompanied by the deliverance of the sinner. This, and nothing but this, is the thought of the Lord: see 1 Pet. iv. 12, 17; Luke xxiii. 31. But He expresses this in the typical language of sacrifice; both because this language supplied Him with the briefest and most comprehensive expression, and because in Isaiah, whose concluding words He had quoted, two of the preceding verses had affirmed that the saints should be brought to the Lord for a meat-offering, Is. lxvi. 20, compare lx. 7; Mal. i. 11; Rom. xv. 16. Even the fire consumes only that which is combustible: if the worm in Gehenna should die, the fire also would be extinguished, and there would remain in the ashes the pure salt, the basis of things allied to fire, and which resists all destruction as well as corruption. Now the *grace* of God in the *sacrifice* converts for us the fire itself into salt; yea, it covers and softens, to the greatest possible extent, its unavoidable effect, in the mere salt. Salt, in the Old Testament, although it is called, Lev. ii. 13, "the salt of the covenant of thy God," and mention is made, Num. xviii. 19, "of an eternal covenant of salt," does not depend for its meaning on any allusion, such as has been derived from profane writers, to a common, friendly meal,—like the eastern and western proverb "to eat with another a bushel of salt,"—but on an allusion to its being akin to fire, to which, at the same time, it is a marked opposite.[1] Salt is imperishable, it resists the action of fire, it has an indestructible endurance; salt also makes what it salts thus durable; still it does this exactly by its burning power and effect, bringing with it in another form the salutary fire. This

[1] We cannot (like Bähr, Stud. u. Krit. 1849. 3) hold by the sense of *the covenant* from the passage in the Pentateuch as the only one which the Lord must have had exclusively in view; for, that passage does not exclude, it rather suggests, a wider sense (if we correctly understand *the covenant* according to its radical idea); and the Lord manifestly speaks of salt and fire in regard to the effects which they produce. We leave our readers to compare our exegesis with the Treatise of Bähr, which, correct though it be in many respects, does not apprehend the proper kernel and connection.

Hosted by Google

is the covenant of God with man; the covenant of delivering and preserving grace with the sinner in the sacrifice of reconciliation.[1] It has been falsely supposed that no salt was applied to the burnt-offering; but the regulation for the meat-offering, Lev. ii. 13, is extended in the concluding sentence to כָּל־קָרְבָּן; and קָרְבָּן is the general name for all offerings, Lev. i. 2. Our Lord says here πᾶσα θυσία, and in Ezek. xliii. 24, the burnt-offering is salted, to show that the fire has been changed from a killing into a preserving fire.[2] The salt of the offering is certainly not (as Michaelis in his Typical Theology, p. 63, 64, and Oetinger in his Dictionary, p. 426, singularly enough, considering the miserable mistake, agree for once), the rendering it indestructible for the eternal fire of vengeance.[3] The mere salting, finally, is the mildest form of exempting and preserving against all other fire.

Of what, therefore, does our Lord speak in ver. 49, after He had previously spoken of hell-fire? He means and He very plainly mentions three processes in relation to ourselves. The terrible portion, which is the final issue, is the proper *consuming* fire. The better portion which He advises us to choose, and which He recommends to us as a voluntary self-offering, is to

[1] "Salt is what preserves the earth, and fire and wind (spirit) are concealed in salt. Take dust by itself, its power arises from its combination with salt." *Perceptions of a Prophetess.* Hamburg: by *Perthes* ii. 172. "The basis of all matter is salt, as is seen when any substance is burned and the ashes all washed." *V. Meyer*, as above, Vol. i. p. 386, where there is also given an explanation of Is. li. 6, different from the common one, and which makes the word parallel to the *rags* of Jer. xxxviii. 11, 12.

[2] On the use of salt in heathen sacrifices, see *Rosenmülleri Scholia* on the passage in Leviticus.

[3] Compare Oetinger, as edited by Auberlen, p. 151, ss. "In order that the fire of hell may do him no harm, he must be salted with fire; *i.e.*, he must be pervaded by the heavenly corporeity of the flesh and blood of Jesus." Is this exegesis? The modern resuscitation of Oetinger renders it necessary to advert to his errors and confusions. Very frequently only his fundamental ideas are correct; he fails altogether in rearing his superstructures. I regret that I have not as yet seen his special treatise "on the Secret of Salt," Stuttgart. 1770. Still I can refer to his *Memorial of the Princess Antonia* (Tübingen, 1763), where, p. 379, 388, there is a full discussion on the *Sayings* of Jesus by St Mark; for the critical consideration of which this is not the place. Compare what Auberlen, p. 445, 446, has contributed on this subject.

Hosted by Google

allow ourselves to be sanctified by the *salting salt.* In the middle between these there stands an intermediate clause,—the *salting fire;* and of this also He says that every one must experience it, that no one without a burnt-offering can become a meat-offering before God.[1] He intends to teach that in order to escape condemnation, there remain for us *two* means of becoming holy and happy. Nitzsch, in his sermon on the Saying before us, names these with perfect accuracy: "the salt of truth, and the fire of affliction." Braune calls the salt, "Evangelical doctrine, the truth of the Gospel." The mere being salted would thence denote the voluntary purification of our souls, in obeying the truth through the Spirit (1 Pet. i. 22); thus the life which mortifies the old man would enter in the gentlest possible manner, although even thus the Gospel must show its burning power against sin. For, "the holiness of God, manifested with the grace of God, in all its consequences, effects, and demands, is the salt of truth of which we speak;"—grace chastises us so severely for the denial of our ungodly nature, that "we must read in the last sufferings of our dying Redeemer, that if we sin willingly there remains no more sacrifice for sin." But who has become an offering of God without the aid of affliction, which, through the accompanying help of God, constrains us to obedience? Consequently, we must not sever the two united means of grace; they go always in every variety of way together as the Lord here embraces them in one view. In themselves they are not entirely separated; because the salt burns as well as salts, and the fire salts as well as burns. Even the word is a fire (Jer. xxiii. 29) in the same way as the Holy Spirit is (Matt. iii. 11). Besides, in every case the rod of affliction is indispensable (Heb. xii. 6–8); and, on the other hand, no affliction is salutary unless the word of God accompany it, or be recalled to our mind if we have forgotten it. Each of the two former gives efficacy to the other; but the salt is, and continues to be, assuredly the main thing even when fire accompanies it. The conflict teaches us to attend to the word (Is. xxviii. 19), and

[1] Therefore not as Hamann (i. 112, 113) for once superficially writes, "Instead of the fire we escape with the salt." This latter is merely "the sense of our sins, and faith in Him who has extinguished the fire of sin." There is *no* understanding of the text here.

Hosted by Google

the word renders the conflict salutary to us.—Finally, if we have thus far understood our Lord, we cannot submit at the end to any limitation drawn from a theological system, as to the fire of judgments destined yet to heal and to deliver;—as Bengel does, who finds it necessary to add, "in this life, however." For that a *salting* with fire may still be possible and real, there as well as here, in Sheol as well as on earth, as is frequently intimated elsewhere in Scripture, our Lord here is as far from denying as He is on the other hand from being able to say of his πῦρ ἄσβεστον that πυρὶ ἁλισθήσεται.

Ver. 50. Our Lord passes from the fire that shall never be quenched to the fire that salts; from that remote fire to the mildest salt which contains fire. In so far as we are a meat-offering, well pleasing to God, certainly not without a burnt-offering to be prepared in the first instance; and also afterwards, in so far as we would be, and would continue to be such, among each other and before the world;—are we exhorted in the most gracious manner never to suffer this salutary and necessary salt to be wanting, never to suffer it to be lost. The fire must, alas! afflict us because of sin, and itself cometh of evil: SALT is and remains alone relatively the best for us, the unmingled good (καλὸν, which of itself can and will help to the καλόν σοι, vers. 43–48), which works out our preparation even in the fire. Hold this fast, *have it*, keep it, and use it well,—is our Lord's word to His disciples. "The more salt there is in you, the less will you need fire." This fire stands alone in the hands of God: *ignem habere non est facultatis humanae.* But to receive and to hold fast the power of sanctifying truth for voluntary obedience in self-denial, and to reject our own inward corruption (to forsake all that we have, as the passage in St Luke xiv. 33, 34, is again explained in harmony with the above)—this is good and beautiful. Our Lord thus returns to the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. v. 13). The light, though contrasted with fire in its mild and beautiful illuminating power, cannot nevertheless be without the pungency of salt, in order really to do its work effectually: "would ye be the light of the world, then show yourselves also as the salt of the earth." The salt of God is good, the power of His truth and the effect of His Spirit; but ye children of men, as always previously salted yourselves with

Hosted by Google

this salt, must also become another salting salt. This salt, in its secondary effect, condescendingly so called, which salt ye are, may alas become saltless (ἄναλον); its calling, its name, and appearance giving the lie to its nature, its vile end standing in marked contrast to its good beginning: beware of this, for man cannot be renewed and born again the second time. Has the strength of the first sacrifice become annihilated by a complete apostasy, there cannot be a second. How, in this case, would ye again help yourselves? O how many great lights of the world and of the Church, who allowed themselves to become deficient in salt first in their own hearts and houses, and by and by in all their light and teaching, have finally fallen into this condemnation! Therefore *have*, keep and use well, the salt of truth *in yourselves*,—that truth which works holiness and self-denial within us, lives through the energy of grace and of the Spirit, and mortifies sin. "Then and then only shall ye have and keep peace also *among yourselves* as disciples." Again, "maintain peace and *love*, in order that ye may not lose in contentions the salt of *humility*:" the one acts and reacts reciprocally upon the other. Hence after this our Lord turns back to the fundamental theme of His discourse, which He had prosecuted from vers. 34, 35; and, hence, St Mark may conclude with this saying, leaving out the further statements given by St Matthew xviii. 10–20. We may notice the contrast ἐν ἑαυτοῖς and ἐν ἀλλήλοις introduced into the unity of the necessary connection:[1]—the inward humility, which always judges itself, and which thus rightly appreciates the real worth and greatness of the lowly and the poor, is the already valid holiness of those who are still sinners, secures the peace of love, and is secured in it. In the first instance, certainly, and above all other things, let each man judge himself only, and exercise patience and forbearance towards others. But then, in the next place, this is not enough of itself. Olshausen remarks, "As salt does not salt salt, but that which is unsalted, so also ought the vital energy of the children of God not to be dissipated in mutual strife, but applied to the quickening of the world." Very good, if all disciples and brethren were one mass of pure

[1] In yourselves salt, among each other peace;—as Hamann correctly points the antithesis.

Hosted by Google

salt! But when a brother sins, I ought to punish him even as a brother, according to the more full directions given by our Lord in St Matthew. I must show my love, working peace and bringing the influence and the might of brotherhood to bear upon him in truth, not in a soft insipid style (like the pietistic reciprocal fondling of each other by the dear children of God), but according to the necessities of the case, with all sharpness of punishment. Consequently, also, "Salt yourselves one with another, in order that all together may be able to salt the world; but do this in the exercise of that lowly love, which rightly exercises and rightly endures punishment." The ἐν ἑαυτοῖς and the ἐν ἀλλήλοις run mutually into each other. Let your speech (and your conduct), first, towards each other, and secondly, towards every man, be at all times not merely ἐν χάριτι, lovely and loving in forgiving grace, but, at the same time (and the genuine χάρις τοῦ θεοῦ is never anything but this), seasoned with salt, and made effective for improvement and edification. (Col. iv. 6; Eph. iv. 29.) This is something more, something better than the Greek *Charis* of amiable intercourse with one another, on which many saltless persons are again in their insipidity expending much false diligence. The salt of the disciples of Christ means something very different from the Attic salt of which Stilling, though in a style not Attic, satirises—"It is good for nothing but confectionary!" The ancient Catholic Church had in view the salt of Christ, when they used that substance at the ceremony of baptism, and on other occasions. It is only of it that the proverb in Horst's Daemonomagie holds true: "the Devil cannot endure salt, and all the dishes at the Devil's meals are without salt." Search many of our modern festive entertainments, and you find it alas to be so: but be not present at such without introducing the salutary offence of the cross among the false charities, without introducing in season and out of season (2 Tim. iv. 2) your little grain of salt, provided you have any, to the vexation of Satan and to the salvation of his saltless companions in the name of the Lord. Again, ye brethren, quarrel not among yourselves, if one goes abroad and another stays at home: but punish only this in yourselves and others, that ye who are the salt of the world, instead of salting it, feed together on what is unsalted.

Hosted by Google

THE WIDOW'S MITE.

(Mark xii. 43, 44; Luke xxi. 3, 4.)

St Mark preserves, in a few words (and St Luke agrees with him, or copies from him, almost word for word), an externally lovely incident from the last days of our Lord—an incident which, in its simplicity, is still as fresh and expressive as ever it was. The saying of the Lord which occurs in connection with this incident is, we may observe first, the last which we have to consider of the new Sayings given by St Mark; as we have resolved to follow, in the first instance, all the Evangelists only up to the history of the last sufferings. There is little of *explanation* needed, for the simple incident and the saying express of themselves a clear meaning: still it is right to call attention to the easily overlooked connection of the whole. Immediately after the denunciation of woes upon the Pharisees, consequently also (as Matt. xxiii. informs us) after the announcement of the judgments upon Jerusalem, and of the desolation of the temple, after the terribly sharp word of farewell, "Ye shall henceforth see Me no more," He does not *at once* go forth;—no, He sits down quietly once more to *observe* what is going on in this temple. By His very *silence* He says, "Have ye whom I have now upbraided, any answer to return? I am ready to hear it." Before this He has had many questions put to Him, and He has always been ready with His answer. In holy wrath, and in the language of rebuke called forth by the zeal of love, He has spoken His last public temple-discourse, and no man has dared to reply to Him: but He lets it depend on them whether it is to be His last. He does not seek to escape from the wrath which He had provoked by His powerful rebukes, for His hour is not yet come;—after such a discourse He sits quietly down. This is one general point. Still further,—He sits down right opposite the treasury-chest, to observe how the people put in their contributions.[1] During the few preceding days He had *taken a*

[1] The γαζοφυλάκιον is not a chamber, or the לִשְׁכָּה of the Treasury (it is not possible that St John could indicate this by the ἐν, viii. 20,—access to it would scarcely be open); nor is it one of thirteen שׁוֹפָרוֹת or (so called after their form) chests for free-will offerings which were

Hosted by Google

view of everything in the temple (Mark xi. 11); He lingers here before He leaves it. For what other purpose but to manifest His condescending patient sympathy with the sanctuary, now desecrated and given over to destruction; and then to intimate symbolically what in future He would by no means fail to do in every house and sanctuary of His people as the rightful Lord and supreme Guardian?—It has been supposed that our Lord takes notice of the pious widow contributing out of her absolute poverty in order to draw a contrast that might put to shame the rapacity of the Pharisees, who devour widows' houses, on which He had previously been pronouncing condemnation in the 40th verse of the preceding chapter. This idea, however, appears to us to destroy the tender beauty of His conduct and of His Saying. We suppose that after the lamentation of His Saviour-heart, as recorded in Matt. xxiii. 37, had been uttered, He does not return to the same strain; He has entirely finished His rebukes, and He has no intention to renew them. He rather calms His agitated heart, by kindly condescending to any trace of godliness which is still to be found[1] in that den of thieves so soon to be broken up; and rejoices over two mites brought to this temple with simple good intent for the sake of God (Luke εἰς τὰ δῶρα τοῦ θεοῦ). This is a lofty contrast between wrath and love; like what we find in Matt. xxi. 13–16; the healing of the sick and the joy in the Hosannahs of the children following immediately the words of rebuke. What manner of man is this! He is never exhausted in the immoveable depths of the love of His holy soul, never unduly excited and moved by the most powerful outbursts of judicial, zealous testimony;

to be found in the women's court, and of which Sepp (iii. 309) gives a very correct account; but, as the article shows, a particular collection-box, to which also Josephus alludes in his Antiq. xix. 6. 1, and in other passages, where he uses another word. St Mark and St Luke have made no error or mistake; we know nothing exactly about the matter.

[1] So far there is something true in the remark of Braune, though expressed by him in too strong and general terms: "in order to recover Himself after His discourse against the Pharisees, to take refuge in the piety of the people." The observation of Lange is more correct, and conceived in a finer spirit: "that He might leave the temple with a warm look of blessing upon the true piety found in the old temple service,"—namely, upon as much or as little of it as was to be found.

Hosted by Google

immediately after a discourse like the preceding one, He has again the calmness, the delight, the ready mind to search out and observe the smallest good.[1] Did He then feel and act thus in the flesh? How does He now look down upon the gifts and offerings in every little church and community, upon what is given and done in the whole world, that He may try it according to its value, its want of value or relative value, especially that He may not overlook the smallest thing; and that He may cry to the churches for each individual I know thy works; and at last may proclaim to all from the judgment-seat, "This ye have done, this ye have not done."

His disciples ought to learn, observe, and lay up in their minds for all future time that He thus sees and shall see. He calls them to Himself, as to witness "an official act," in order that they may learn something great from this little incident; in order that He may bequeath to them and to all His future disciples a word of truth which has ever since been of eminent use in guiding to right judgment those who hold office in His church; and in encouraging and gladdening many a poor man who has given willingly out of his poverty. But at this time it was not designed that the widow who had passed by should hear her own praises; the remark was made confidentially to the disciples alone. Although it might certainly be true that the greater part of the money collected in this chest was applied to evil purposes, and did not go to uphold the true worship of God, the Lord pays no regard to this, but looks at the heart, the good intention of the giver. There is something in His Saying, though infinitely higher and deeper, which bears a resemblance to the exclamation uttered by the martyr, Huss, when a little peasant brought a small piece of wood to increase the flame of his pile, "*O sancta simplicitas!*" For there was indeed such simplicity in *this case;* when a poor widow denied herself of her poverty-penny, which she had carefully saved up, in order to make a little more full the temple treasury, which truly

[1] "It was assuredly no littleness at such a time, when every influence was united to destroy the Redeemer, that He should with calmness of spirit and a heart full of sympathy observe what is related in this short paragraph. Who could have thought that at such a moment such a story could have been told of Jesus?" Stein on St Luke, p. 227.

Hosted by Google

stood in no need of it.[1] But how far is He from the spirit of those who, to show their wisdom, would blame a humble, well-meaning heart!

Our Lord gives emphasis to the expression of His mind by a "Verily, verily, I say unto you" (Luke "truly"). There were many rich people in Jerusalem, who assembled in the temple before the feast, and whose wealth was displayed by their gifts, though in most cases with Pharisaical ostentation. Still our Lord does not draw the contrast in such sharp outline, because He has now no satisfaction in uttering the language of reproof; He does not expressly, for this time, blame and contemn the others; He takes the mildest view of everything. He merely places over against all the gifts from the *rest* (what was certainly a light and small remnant), the two farthings of the poor widow, as being greater than all in His view and in the view of God. He speaks positively: Gracious condescension and heartfelt joy become apparent in the very fulness of the language by which He confirms His assertion of the mere relation between her possessions and her gifts. At the same time, however, His intention is not merely to estimate a relative *plus*, but in doing so, to point out the zeal and ardent impulse of her heart as it prompted her to give, and to offer in simplicity to the house of God. Instead of having anything superfluous, she is in need, she might have asked alms privately or publicly; but instead of doing so she gives away out of her need the last pittance of her poverty, all that she has in her possession. Her means of subsistence, her daily supply, consisted of two very small pieces of money, which together make up a *quadrans*, or a fourth part of an *as*, to which St Luke correctly reduces the amount for the convenience of his Roman readers. Was not this imprudent and strange? She might reasonably have retained one of the two small pieces, if she was determined to give an offering at this time—this would still have been the half of all that she had. But she gave the whole, thinking now in faith of nothing beyond; only now moved, as we manifestly see, on close observation, by something special in her spirit to this frame of gratitude and

[1] In so far we have here *indirectly* what Lange would put too much in the foreground, a confirmation of the objection of Jesus to the Pharisees, who robbed widows' houses.

Hosted by Google

offering; so that, completely forgetting herself and her poverty, and the morrow, she rises up and gives all that she has. The Lord knew this,—we ask not *whence*. When He looked upon any one with the whole strength of appropriating love, He could read by a glance what was in the heart; when the Father designed to give Him a word for the world, He gave Him, in the particular case, the wonderful knowledge of what otherwise would have been concealed. Thus, in this homely utterance, the majesty and condescension, the greatness and the kindness of the Lord, are again united: thus it stands for us like a testimony taken from the midst of a life and conduct throughout of a similar character,—telling us who He was who died for us, what Divine-human clearness of vision, and fulness of love, dwelt in Him, even in these last days.

Hosted by Google

THE GOSPEL OF ST LUKE.

THE FIRST PREACHING IN NAZARETH.

(Luke iv. 17–27 [Matt. xiii. 57; Mark vi. 4.])

THE first two chapters of the third Gospel, as we observed at the very beginning of this work (Vol. i. p. 1), reach to a point further back than the commencement of either St Matthew or of St Luke; and manifest an aim the opposite of that which characterises the prefatory verses of St John, regarding the Word made flesh. It is for this cause that St Luke's Gospel leads us at once to those introductory events, lying far back, which preceded the birth of Jesus Christ, through the power of the Holy Ghost; lets us hear the announcement of Gabriel, the songs of praise of Zacharias and Mary, the glad tidings of the angels to the shepherds, and the praise of Simeon and Anna; and next gives us the only record which we have of the first Saying (earnest of what was to come), uttered by the Son as He grew in the Spirit, concerning His heavenly Father. It is hence entirely in accordance with this character of the Gospel of St Luke, that instead of the summaries of the public Sermon on the Mount delivered in Galilee, Matt. iv. 17; Mark i. 15, we have an exact (as it were esoteric) narrative of the first appearance of our Lord in His own Nazareth. For here Br. Bauer is most assuredly right, in opposition to Ebrard, in maintaining that a *first* appearance is here related. This is so patent on the face of the whole transaction, and in all its details—from the quoting of the text in Isaiah, down through the fastening of all eyes upon him, and the "to-day" of His own lips, to the wicked close,—

Hosted by Google

that it is impossible to have a clear view of any one thing, if we are to suppose that Jesus had on a preceding Sabbath spoken in the Synagogue at Nazareth. And then, what other than the first appearance, or nearly so, could it have been? Why all the wondering and offence taken on any occasion subsequent to the first? There is nothing against its being the first visit in the expression κατὰ τὸ εἰωθὸς αὐτῷ (a pure Attic Greek phrase)—an expression which has been very generally misunderstood. These words refer not, as Schleiermacher supposes, to our Lord's habit of teaching in the synagogues; such a habit, in so short a period, could not yet have been formed. In this case they would form a continuation of the 15th verse, and would be sufficiently tautological. Moreover, we should find the Redeemer here already in the middle of His duties as teacher; and St Luke would have antedated this apparently late event to favour his own plan. This εἰωθὸς (which certainly does not denote a habit beginning no longer ago than yesterday or the day before, see Matt. xxvii. 19, Acts xvii. 2) depends not upon the rising to read and speak, but upon the going into the Synagogue at Nazareth, and is manifestly to be read in close connection with "*where He was brought up.*" St Luke, casting his eye back from Nazareth, manifestly connects his narrative with chap. ii. 51, 52, making it, as it were, a continuation of the account there given. We consequently perceive in this a notice extremely important, which brings before us, though in a single accidental trait, the entire private life of our Lord, as subject to all authority; viz., that hitherto He had been accustomed to attend this[1] Synagogue at Nazareth as a silent hearer. He had not withstood all the folly and perversion which, in the reading of the word, must have proceeded from many lips, because the Spirit had not yet anointed and sent Him to speak.[2] It is quite correct to take a deep view of the statement, and reason out the

[1] The only one in the little village; for the plural in Matt. xiii. 54, which is expressed by Luther, is a false reading.

[2] Therefore He had never up to this time *read aloud*, as Bengel supposes; this would have been inconsistent with His condition, though His keeping silence would not. Sepp (ii. 122, comp. 62) thinks of Him also as the Maphtir or Reader, perhaps also the Interpreter in the Synagogue at Nazareth: but this is a very absurd idea, which must disappear when narrowly examined.

Hosted by Google

conclusion, that Jesus, from his twelfth till his thirtieth year, had attended every Sabbath day as a devout hearer: we cannot strike this great record out of Scripture except by an exposition which is not only false in itself, but which produces confusion also in other directions.

Further, we have already explained, Vol. ii. p. 270, that we regard the visit to Nazareth, recorded in Matt. xiii. 54–58 (Mark vi. 1–6), as a second visit paid at a later period; and the account there given, notwithstanding all its apparent similarity, as by no means in all respects identical with the first appearance which St Luke records in the passage before us. From an independent and firm conviction we abide by this view; and shall neither appeal to the learned in its favour, nor discuss at any length the arguments of its opponents. Schleiermacher's critical research has very far from succeeded in establishing the identity of such different histories recorded in such different connections: an identity which cannot be held without a strange violation of Scripture. Where the Evangelists give no positive chronological data we hold that we are at liberty, and that it is our duty, to assign any place we please to their narratives;—to such narratives, we repeat, as are given in a general way, and not in chronological sequence. But when we find a clear and express connection of time, we regard, in conformity with our principles of criticism, these terms as at least so far inspired that they cannot record anything which is historically *false*. This is the case here. We must not vaguely read Matt. xiii. 54 as meaning, "He came (among other things) *also on one occasion* at an early period to His native city;" because to simple readers, (and it is for such that the Scriptures are written), the καὶ ἐλθών, according to all rules of language, depends upon the μετῆρεν ἐκεῖθεν of the former verse 53, and this again upon the ἐτέλεσεν τὰς παραβολὰς ταύτας. Similarly, in Mark vi. 1 the ἐξῆλθεν ἐκεῖθεν depends upon the preceding chapter, the fifth, by a self-evidencing chronology; inasmuch as only the cures mentioned in Matt. ix. 27–34 come between. And there are assuredly many histories anticipated by St Matthew which come between Matt. xiii. 52 and 53. But the fact that the Lord visited Nazareth after and not before the discourse which He delivered in parables, is firmly established, and cannot be overturned.

Hosted by Google

Where then is there, in Luke iv. 28–31, room for the performance of the several miracles which St Matthew and St Mark relate as having been wrought previous to the *second* visit? There is an undoubted difference; and it is quite as "theologically" arbitrary as is anything to be found in the exposed theological nakedness of Strauss, Bauer, and Co., for Olshausen to say, "He probably healed a few sick before speaking in the synagogue at Nazareth," and then to remove the contradiction which thence arises between this and Luke iv. 23 by adding, "such cures may have been wrought in the quiet family circles," so that the rest of Nazareth knew nothing about them. More orthodox theologians have ceased to treat the written word as Schleiermacher of old did; and it is sad that, in *such* instances as the above, Olshausen, otherwise of precious memory, should have to be classed with that old school. Finally, Alford holds it "utterly impossible" that Jesus should have been thus treated at His first visit, and should then have expressed wonder at their unbelief on His second visit. But we simply reply that it is precisely at their *confirmed* unbelief that He expresses wonder; at their continued unbelief after their former outbreak of passion, and the disgrace which followed it, after His long continued teaching and working of miracles.

Thus, the first visit to Nazareth, an event which comes in between the 13th and the 11th and 12th verses of Matt. iv.—which is related by St Luke, and alluded to by Matt. iv. 13—furnished the cause why our Lord selected Capernaum as His place of abode; He visited Nazareth at a later period a second time. Fearlessly, though they would have put Him to death, did He afford them a second gracious opportunity, kindly dealing with them and not giving up His own native city. It can scarcely be thought that He has at once *altogether given up* His own unhappy Nazareth for its first sin, though that sin was certainly a grievous one. The denial of His *return* once more strikes out of His life a trait as beautiful as it is significant. On the other hand, it may well be imagined that the inhabitants of Nazareth, though a little ashamed of their first outbreak of passion, and not disposed to act in the same way against the Lord, after the lengthened and strong demonstration which they had received of His character, would still continue to cherish the same

Hosted by Google

sentiments and adopt the same language, *πόθεν τούτῳ ταῦτα*. Then, in regard to the accounts given by St Matthew and St Mark of the address and the reply,—accounts which by no means give a conversation between Jesus and the Nazarenes, held literally and exactly in this very way, but only a general view of what was stated and of what followed from it—we are not indisposed to grant that there is an echo of the former incident in their narrative; and, so thinking, we shall give in one exposition the kindred and blended results of the two visits to Nazareth.[1]

[1] John iv. 44 is a mere note, which is quite unintelligible except on the supposition that St John had in his view other well-known records. All intelligent critics are prepared to admit that he generally supplements and refers to the synoptical Evangelists; consequently "it cannot be compatible with sound principles of hermeneutics not to regard that exposition of this passage in St John's Gospel which makes it agree with the other Gospels, as the most obvious and most natural one" (Baumlein, *Stud. u. Kritik.* 1846. 2). We accept this with the greater confidence as the "Jesus Himself *testified*" cannot in the language of St John be merely "a remark of the Evangelist" (as Wieseler asserts), but must be a reminiscence of a saying, and a well-known saying, of the Lord. Jesus, however, did not give His *testimony* as to a prophet's not being honoured in his own country so frequently as that "He was accustomed to say so:" He merely said so once or twice in Nazareth. It is not absolutely impossible that St John gave to the saying of the Lord a wider *application* of fulfilment; and that on this occasion he alluded to Judea, because of our Lord's birthplace at Bethlehem, in opposition to Galilee. Origen was the first who adopted this view; he did not however suppose that there was any reference to Bethlehem, but regarded Judea as the native land of the Prophets generally, which assuredly it was not. So Wieseler supposes that St John alludes to Bethlehem. But when we reflect that this ingeniously imagined allusion to Bethlehem as the Lord's birthplace (it is nowhere spoken of as such in St John's Gospel, not even in chap. vii. 41, 42), and the extension of the idea of *πατρίς* from little Bethlehem to the whole of Judea, are exceedingly strange;—that Jesus (and here, at least, Lücke is in the right), at the commencement of His course, was well received in Judea, as is related in chap. iv. 1, ii. 23, iii. 26;—that (according to Bäumlein's correct remark) *πατρίς*, where it occurs in connection with this well-known proverbial saying, uttered as a testimony by Jesus, must decidedly have the sense of "the place of His home;"—that *πατρίς* in the writings of the Synoptical Evangelists themselves, to which St John alludes, is the usual designation of Nazareth;—further, that the natural cause which gave rise to the proverb "that a prophet is not esteemed in his own country," does not exist in the birthplace which the prophet had long ago left (most certainly not to it as denoting

Hosted by Google

The incidents related by St John, from chap. i. 35 to chap. iv. 54, come in chronologically between the 13th and the 14th verses of the chapter before us. The first appearance of our Lord in Nazareth falls in with this commencement of His work of preaching and working miracles in Galilee,—with His visit at the feast in Jerusalem, and a short residence in Judea—for naturally He left His own city for a little while, but would not let it wait too long for Him. He had already been residing in Capernaum, Jo. ii. 12. In that place, after the *second* miracle, with which St John ceases (Jo. iv. 54) generally to enumerate, or indeed fully to narrate, the miracles wrought in Galilee, He wrought still a few others; this, however, is doubtful, see after-

the country in which it lies), but to the place of abode where he had for a length of time lived like other men;—and finally, that even St John, as at chap. vii. 41, and at a later period, chap. xviii. 5, 7, and also in a very appropriate passage, chap. i. 45, 46, was acquainted only with the common *opinion* in regard to the origin of the offence taken at the Lord, that He was *of Nazareth*:—we shall be inclined to give due weight to the view taken by Cyril, and which was long the prevailing one, in opposition to Br. Bauer, Baur, Ebrard, Wieseler, and others, and by no means to regard it as "deserving of notice only at the first glance," as Lücke supposes. The view of this last mentioned writer, who finds Galilee in the πατρίς and considers γάρ as equivalent to "in fact" (Jesus found here in Galilee not such faith, without miracles, as in Samaria), is, we agree with *Wieseler*, "very hard." Hauff does not mend the matter (*Stud. u. Krit.* 1849, 1), who sees "a comprehensive view of the effects of the work of Jesus in Galilee," and, contrary to the meaning of the word, explains ἐμαρτύρησεν as meaning, "Jesus Himself, like all other prophets, must furnish a proof of this adage!" Our decision therefore is, that St John indicates, very briefly, the cause of what he is afterwards to mention, that Jesus went to the *land* of Galilee generally, and not specially to *His own* Nazareth (as might have been expected according to chap. i. 45). In chap. iii. 22 at least, there is such a distinction, viz., between Judea and Jerusalem—a distinction which it has been erroneously supposed is not to be thought of. *Or rather* (and this we believe is the whole truth, if *everything* be considered), he has in his mind, ver. 44, the whole *preceding* occurrence at Nazareth, gives a general preface in vers. 43, 44, and then goes back and gives the full statement in vers. 46–54. In this case we see the accuracy of ver. 54,—we have the Nobleman's Son referred to *before* Luke iv. 23. Bäumlein gives in general a good defence of the application of this passage to Nazareth; and Gemberg agrees with it (*Stud. u. Krit.* 1845, 1). Here also for once we agree with Sepp (ii. 236), according to whom St John mentally understood the clause: οὐ δὲ μετέβη εἰς πόλιν Ναζαρέτ, *but He went not to Nazareth.*

Hosted by Google

wards Luke iv. 23. From that time, however, He took up His proper abode at Capernaum, as Nazareth had cast Him out. His preaching in Nazareth certainly took place *before* the Sermon on the Mount; and was no other than a preliminary and lowly commencement of His *evangelical* work, exhibiting its utmost fulness of grace—a private prelude, as it were, to that magnificent *beginning* which was immediately to follow.

Here spake He "the gracious words" (λόγοι τῆς χάριτος), which the Holy Spirit has not seen fit to record for our use, but whose substance we may gather partly from the text drawn from Isaiah, and partly from the opening word as given by St Luke in the 21st verse. Thus we have also the first word of His mouth to a private circle, uttered with all the grace of a Divine *captatio benevolentiæ;* and, though with the perfect knowledge of their unbelief and envy, in the mildest possible form:—I have come to fulfil; it is of Me that the Scripture prophesies. And this beginning of the word,—by the Spirit who anointed Him to preach the Gospel,—is similar to that which we afterwards hear on the day of Pentecost: viz., a *passage from the prophecies*, with an announcement that this prophecy has now come to pass and is fulfilled.

But the hearers would not hear in faith, and were offended at the son of Joseph. The subsequent address, which followed this gracious preaching, and which still continued with the same kindness to utter to them the *words of truth* (ver. 25), is peculiar to St Luke. In this address our Lord directs the attention of those who despised Him to the general unbelief of Israel, as manifested against the prophets of God from the beginning till now; and in doing so He ponders within Himself, in the spirit of prophecy, that which at a future period He would be compelled openly to express, Luke xiii. 33, 34. First of all, *anticipating* any further expression of what they might *say*, He exposes to them their unbelieving, contracted, provincial, sign-demanding, thoughts; and yet He pleads on their behalf that they were only like the rest of Israel, yea, like all other men, by quoting a *second* proverbial saying, ver. 24, in reply to the former one which He had put into their lips, regarding "the physician only for others." This more immediate Israelitish proverb—summing up the well-known, melancholy result of all

Hosted by Google

Israelitish history—contains in itself a description of *faith* (the reception of a testimony), as a necessary condition which He would require; and also of *unbelief* as the cause of His rejection, —an event which He was well aware was near at hand. Upon this He gives two most striking examples of this too true saying, drawn from the history of the two first great prophets and *workers of miracles;* but certainly He cannot say anything to show that the *truth*, which His grace cannot and will not keep back, is at the same time leading Him on to the very verge of prophesying that the word of God, which the Jews were rejecting, would pass over to the Gentiles.[1] He would apparently have said something more, had not their wrath, breaking out into an open tumult, interrupted Him by a demonstration that He had spoken the truth; by plain evidence that He was something more than merely Jesus *of Nazareth;* and by such a revelation of the souls of these sinners, among whom He had grown up as the Holy One of God, as revealed still further His longsuffering patience and kindness in this same Nazareth.

Vers. 17–19. It must have been a matter of great delicacy and difficulty (humanly speaking, and humanly viewing it as we are entitled to do) for the Lord Jesus to deliver the first sermon and testimony on behalf of Himself in that very Nazareth, and in that very synagogue where He had so long been a humble, silent listener. He referred that testimony, therefore, very specially to the hands and counsel of His Father. He had begun to manifest Himself before the world, and had been magnified in many other schools, when an intimation of the Father's will, conveyed through the Spirit, leads Him back for the first time to the place where he had so long remained in concealment. That He will not keep silence is certainly the expectation which all entertain concerning Him; still scarcely has any one ventured to ask Him to speak, as they would have asked a Rabbi or a man of learning. *He stood up*—which, according to a custom existing from the days of Nehemiah (viii. 4, 5), was a special intimation that He wished to read a passage of Scrip-

[1] Another illustration of the reason why this sequel to the preaching is embraced in the plan of St Luke's Gospel—the Gospel specially sent to the Gentiles.

Hosted by Google

ture, inclusive of the usual exposition.[1] Who but must feel the importance of this moment for Him and for Nazareth! *What* shall He read, as He certainly does not mean to be satisfied with the mere reading? The *Son*, in His *humility*,—with which, on His coming forward after His long period of self-denial He must have been specially filled (to speak again in the language of men),—was not under the necessity of being anxious about this, or of inquiring after it. The *rule* and *wont* to which He had hitherto been subject, accompanies Him with its blessings up to this point of publicity and transition; the Father prepares everything for His hand and for His mouth, in this path of obedience. It is a matter of great importance that the practice of the synagogue, of introducing the text of Scripture previous to the oral address, is here, at the turning point between the Old and New Testaments, consecrated by Him, who Himself is the substance of all Scripture, and is confirmed anew for all future time. There was delivered to Him (by the minister afterward mentioned as the חַזָּן, שַׁמָּשׁ) the roll of the prophet Isaiah, undoubtedly because in the ordinary course a lesson from that prophet fell to be read on that Sabbath. But here is the limit to which the Lord will and can go in compliance with the ordinary course of procedure in the synagogue. He has to testify and to proclaim something new and for the first time. We cannot, certainly (with the worthy country minister in the *Evangelical Kirchenzeitung*), find in the fact that our Lord "left the *Paraschioth* and sections and asked a text from His Father," an example to be imitated by us, and to be regarded as sanctioning our modern freedom from ecclesiastical control in regard to the portions of Scripture to be read and preached from. There is still a great difference between our sermons and this Sermon; and, moreover, there are sufficient other reasons against the slavishness of unqualified adherence to prescribed portions, a practice which quenches the Spirit, and forces into the background the other parts of the sacred volume. But this much appears clear to our humble judgment, that St Luke by the expression "*found the place*" does not indicate that our Lord opened the roll, searching for and carefully selecting a passage,

[1] Alford aptly reminds us of the title given to Ezra by Josephus: ἀναγνώστης τοῦ θείου νόμου. Ant. xi. 5, 1.

Hosted by Google

but that the passage was the gift of His Father, provided for Him by His guidance; that as soon as our Lord opened the roll His eyes fell upon the right text for His word, and that He forthwith began to read it.

It is, in truth, the most suitable passage of Scripture that could possibly have been found; and, if others admire the wisdom of the Lord in its choice, it comes to the same thing if we acknowledge that this wisdom was on this occasion bestowed upon Him at the moment by the Father. We feel at once that no royal and kingly text would here have been appropriate; as the utmost possible degree of condescension was necessary in order that Nazareth might not take offence, except through its own sin, at the first word of testimony spoken by its "carpenter." Hence, in the first instance, mention is made only of His having been sent and anointed by the Holy Spirit *to preach* (a fact which becomes immediately obvious); and only of *the Gospel for men's broken hearts*;—in expressions which spiritually interpret the *miracles of healing* which the Lord had already begun to work, like the words in which we afterwards read of them in Matt. xi. 5, 6. Therefore in the very first word there is an appeal directly made to the Baptism of Jesus in Jordan, which was His anointing with the Spirit; and to that which occurred at the same time, viz., the testimony, which could not possibly be unknown to the Nazarenes, given by the Baptist on behalf of their own Jesus, and which had introduced Him to them in the way appointed by God. But still there is not here, as had been the case everywhere else at the commencement of His preaching, any lofty utterance concerning the coming *kingdom of heaven*, or any earnest word about *repentance*. He *takes for granted* that there are present already some penitent souls who would welcome, as tidings of joy, a proclamation which brought healing of broken hearts, deliverance and redemption from misery; to them this would be, what it was, the most benignant and most attractive announcement of grace and love—taken from the very midst of all that had in former times been written of Christ. Are we not right in saying that it looks as if this passage had been written for this very occasion, and could not have been fulfilled in any other way?

Hosted by Google

In the book of Isaiah, from the 49th chapter to the end, which may be regarded as the third great section of the whole, the Messianic prophecies become, more than hitherto, yea as far as is possible under the Old Testament, free from types, clear, and perspicuous. Everything looks and points straight forward into the future, when Israel shall be delivered by the Lord with an everlasting deliverance (chap. xlv. 17), and brought into an eternal covenant of the sure mercies of David (chap. lv. 3). The spiritual import of this future redemption, deliverance, and preparation for a *true Israel* of God, is everywhere declared. The wonderful counsel according to which this true Israel should be prepared in the person of the *Servant* of the Lord, who Himself is in the first place the true Israel, the Fulfiller of all prophecy and more than all this, is pre-eminently set forth and unfolded chap. xlix.–lv. The engrafting of the People into this Servant Israel, through His expiatory and regenerating and quickening sufferings, is the thrice returning subject of announcement; is three times expressly asserted in the conclusion, and declared to belong to the gracious covenant about thus to be ratified. (The three sections are, first, chap. xlix.; second, chap. l.–lii. 12; and third, chap. lii. 13 to the end of chap. lv.) Upon this, as a sequence, there is founded, chap. lvi.–lx., *an offer* of these mercies of David, that is of the Messianic mercies, in the form of an address, which, containing within it an emphatic contrast, and ascending each time from reproof to consolation, is directed to rebellious, sinful Israel, such as it existed at the time the prophet wrote. But the text for Nazareth is not taken from this section; it is taken from the very last one, which speaks plainly upon every preceding subject, and brings the whole to a close,—from that first affecting evangelical *invitation* in the lips of the Sent and the Anointed One, through the blindness of Israel, the calling of the Gentiles, and subsequently the restoration of Israel, to the most remote final view of the New Jerusalem created for joy, and of the new heavens and the new earth. I beseech you, I beseech you with my whole heart, my dear brother theologians, read once more the so-called Pseudo-Isaiah, and read with real simplicity, that you may read and understand him as our Lord who here testifies that the Scripture was fulfilled in Himself must have read and

Hosted by Google

understood him. Then, assuredly, will you see in the clear light of His Spirit (if only you really pray *for it*) that chap lxi. 1, 2, 3, was spoken not only by the then prophet, but also through the mouth of this prophet by the other Prophet yet to come, of Whom he prophesies, and in Whose mouth alone the words reach the full sense for which the Spirit of prophecy gave them: a delightful summary of the whole consolation of redemption which He alone is able to preach; and in preaching to impart, because He Himself is the Redeemer.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me: this is He of whom this had already been announced at the beginning, Is. xi. 2, and afterwards at chap. xlii. 2. *Because* (οὗ εἵνεκεν, יַעַן is manifestly to be thus understood) He hath *anointed* Me (therewith): that means in truth the Messiah or Christ; and Jesus must assuredly announce Himself as such, even in the very first word at Nazareth. *He hath sent* Me to preach *glad tidings* to the poor: that is, This is certainly He whom the Lord and His Spirit send, according to Is. xlviii. 16: (on this we request the reader to compare our exposition in the Preface of the first volume.) In and with this בַּשֵּׂר there begins, at the same time, the חֲבשׁ לִנְשְׁבְּרֵי־לֵב, the binding and healing of broken hearts with the consolations of grace, chap. lvii. 15, Ps. cxlvii. 3. In connection with such preaching there is further announced and proclaimed a *deliverance* (ἄφεσις, דְּרוֹר, with reference to the type of the year of Jubilee, Lev. xxv. 10, Ezek. xlvi. 17) for all captives, for all who are in fetters, condemned, held in bondage; consequently, for all who are such in a spiritual sense, like the נִשְׁבְּרֵי־לֵב, Is. xlix. 24, 25;—yea, with absolute assurance, a real פְּקַחְקוֹחַ in the most complete sense to all who are bound; *an opening* and loosening of all bonds.[1]

So far, the progress of language and thought in the original text of Isaiah is as clear as it is deep. In what language or translation the Lord read at Nazareth, we do not exactly know; the Evangelist, however, gives this text to his original Greek readers in a form which partly follows the Septuagint (according to the

[1] There is nothing arbitrary in being willing to take this word, which is exactly parallel with דְּרוֹר, for what it is, an emphatic expression in the redoubled form for the most complete opening. See, on this point, my exposition of Isaiah, p. 718.

Hosted by Google

well-known, well-grounded practice of the New Testament), and partly supplies the want of exactness in that version. On our principles of criticism,[1] we do not believe that He left out *the healing of the broken-hearted*,—a clause which is not wanting in the Septuagint, which expresses so correctly the kernel of the saying, and which is presupposed afterwards in verse 25, in order to account for the introduction by our Lord of the proverb about the Physician. We maintain, with Bengel, that the correct reading is that which contains the clause in question. Further, as the Septuagint (applying פְּקַחְקוֹחַ to the eyes, as פָּקַח and פְּקֹחַ are used, in all other passages, of the eyes; and only once, Is. xlii. 20, of the ears) has translated by *καὶ τυφλοῖς ἀνάβλεψιν*, St Luke retains this expression. For, corresponding really as it does, as far as spiritual captivity and opening are concerned, to the internal meaning of the word in the original, with its double allusion, it also connects the individual passage before us with other kindred passages, such as Is. xlii. 7, xlix. 9. In order, however, to supply the want thus created, and, further, to show that the Lord meant and used the individual passage in its full sense, as interpreted by the entire prophecies of Isaiah, he adds a passage from chap. lviii. 6, blending the two together: *ἀποστεῖλαι τεθραυσμένους ἐν ἀφέσει*, which again suits well with the *συντετριμμένοις*. (The doubled *ἄφεσις* is tautological exactly in the same way as לְשָׁבוּיִם דְּרוֹר and לַאֲסוּרִים פְּקַחְקוֹחַ are in the original text.) It is by no means "a complete interchange of passages, a confounding of words, a failing of memory:"—we would certainly not deny this to be the case, if our conscience and Biblical science could find any satisfactory traces of the existence of anything of the kind anywhere. We have rather here an intelligent grasp of the passages quoted, as far as their spirit is concerned (furnishing an instructive lesson to the sticklers for mere words), accompanied by a regard to the version then in common use,—a grasp such as that which the Spirit of Inspiration taught the New Testament writers to take. Is it not, however, a pity, we must here once more ask with our own heart almost broken, to be obliged to annoy ourselves with contending against such attempts

[1] Which, with the almost entirely unsatisfactory knowledge which we have of manuscript apparatus, inclines us more and more to decide according to *internal* reasons.

Hosted by Google

to bring down holy writ to the level of a human composition, and to disturb in our own heart, and in the hearts of others, the simple impression of passages such as the one now before us, where the believing reader should have no other feeling but that arising from the power of the great message, the blessedness of the glad tidings for the poor? When will it be laid down more than it has hitherto been to believing interpreters in their treatment of the Old and New Testament, that (as Harnack says) the foundation of all true theology is neither more nor less than a broken heart? Truly a broken heart is at no loss to apply to itself in its simplicity the abundance of words, for example, which are given by St Luke for this text; and feels also in it the mind of the Spirit through all the imaginary traces of humanity.

Finally, it is not merely St Luke who breaks off with the *acceptable* year of the Lord: Jesus Himself, as simple feeling will tell us, read no further than this שְׁנַת־רָצוֹן. (Compare Is. xlix. 8; this is generally the New Testament season of grace, the allusion being to the great Jubilee year, Lev. xxv. 10, *the year of grace*, year of favour; not the "welcome year," according to the Septuagint; δεκτός cannot be limited to this.) For He will have, as it was fit that He should have, a purely gracious evangelical text for the beginning of his ministry at Nazareth. The clause which follows in Isaiah, "and a *day of the vengeance* of our God, to comfort all that mourn" (with deliverance from their condemned enemies, see Is. xxxiv. 8, lxiii.-4, "the great day of the wrath and judgment at the close of the year of grace"), occurs in the old versions and Fathers (Vulg. *et diem retributionis*, the day of retribution); but it was obviously introduced from the desire of completing the unfinished text. The Lord, however, had read enough, He closed the book when He had reached this part, and followed up what had been read with the remark, "This day is the fulfilled" with which He began his gracious sermon. And St Luke understood this well enough to abstain, on his part, from appending the clause.[1] There lies, however, in this ἐνιαυτὸς δεκτός, with which the Lord ceases to read and

[1] Compare on this correct view the (Irvingite) treatise, "on the Counsel of God," etc. *Frankf. Zimmer.* 1847. 1. p. 116.

Hosted by Google

begins to preach, a secondary allusion, exceedingly obvious and beautiful, to what has been called "the Galilean year,"—a year peculiarly rich in Christ's gracious preaching. But the reference is not so exclusive as *Bengel* would have us to suppose.

Vers. 20–22. Everything is done according to the rule and custom hitherto observed; this the exact narrative of the Evangelist is designed to tell us. It was the practice in this synagogue, after the passage of Scripture had been read in a standing posture, for the speaker to sit down to deliver his own address: on the contrary, at Antioch in Pisidia, Paul stood up to give the word of exhortation (Acts xiii. 16).[1] The practice here was in harmony with the Lord's manner on other occasions; for we know that He usually adopted the sitting posture in teaching, —an attitude expressive of elevated repose, and which formed a striking contrast to that in which the Baptist called sinners to repentance. In this case, particularly, had our Lord remained standing during the delivery of the gracious discourse, addressed in such accents of tenderness to the heart, His position would not have been, at least, in our feelings, consonant with the occasion. He returned the closed book of the prophet to the officer; probably in conformity to usage, but at the same time because He did not mean to confine Himself to the exposition of the text. In our day, when preachers have no new word of fulfilment to add to the text which contains within itself the glad tidings (not even to the text of the Old Testament, as brought before Christian congregations in the light of its fulfilment), it is a bad practice to shut the Bible and lay it aside when the sermon begins.—*This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears!* This was the sermon to Israel from the text of the Old Testament; just as at a later period the Epistle to the Hebrews sets before us the utmost depths of Christian doctrine only as the right interpretation of the word of the Old Testament.[2] *This Scripture*, like every Scripture, and like the entire Scriptures:—we are not to construe, "this Scripture in your ears," as if the meaning were "this Scripture which you have just now heard:" ἐν τοῖς

[1] The later Jewish arrangements as to the posture, whether sitting or standing, of the teacher or reader, were at that time not fixed.

[2] In New Testament times the Gospels would very soon and naturally come to occupy the place of the sections in the reading of the Scriptures.

Hosted by Google

ὠσὶν ὑμῶν belongs to πεπλήρωται, *is fulfilled in your ears. For, I preach to you, the person who, the substance which, and in the manner in which it is written.* "You now hear the very sermon which the prophet here predicts shall be preached." (V. Gerlach.) *This day:*—a great era this for Nazareth; the first hearing of the tidings of joy and grace (compare Acts xxvi. 29), the first day of the great year of Jubilee which had now dawned. The Lord Himself does not begin from a point far back, with a long argumentative exposition of the text, as was more suitable in His servants (Acts xvii. 2, 3, xviii. 28); but, in the immediate power of the Spirit which was upon Him to reveal Him as the Anointed and Sent One, He hastens to deliver His testimony in the very first word which He utters. *The eyes of all were fastened on Him,* with eager curiosity to see what this son of Joseph, of whom, for some time past, they had heard such great things, has now, after such a long silence, to say to his native city: the Lord places in opposition to this their *ears;* and in doing so, solicits, in the most kindly way, a right hearing undisturbed by their eyes (as at Acts ii. 14); for *faith* cometh into the *heart* only by *hearing* (ver. 18). And now He has preached the most gracious Gospel for the poor, as yet without any demand to practise righteousness in testimony of the grace which brings it, as He did afterwards on the Mount before all the people; so far, therefore, His Sermon is on this occasion a counterpart to that discourse which, after the gracious commencement, took a wider range. Still, we should not have had this lovely, mild, most proper introductory statement,—of which Lange very beautifully says "in opening this Scripture He opens His own heart,"—wherewith in some small measure to draw a veil over the sin and the shame of the Nazarenes who rejected it.

The first impression produced by this sermon, which is briefly and strikingly described in ver. 22, is not to be conceived of as if the people merely wondered that this carpenter's son "could preach so beautifully,"—which would be too much like the modern "vicious practice of perverting preaching from its proper object, and making it the empty vehicle of empty every-day entertainment." No; *this* was not possible, where the Lord was the preacher; and if the conduct of the people could not *at first* be so bad as this, so much the worse was their subsequent de-

Hosted by Google

meanour. *All* bore witness to Him at first, and in the end all were full of wrath, ver. 28. The sweetness, benevolence, and grace (for all this is comprehended in the χάρις as in the חֵן) which, according to Ps. xlv. 3, were poured out on the lips of the Messiah, necessarily evoke a sense of delight on the part of men (Luke ii. 52); but, when sternness of *truth* follows the grace, the wrath of opposition breaks forth. The Evangelist does not intend to describe the first testimony or praise as having been given in express words: the καὶ ἔλεγον properly follows after this. As the result of deep impressions, they involuntarily give their assent in the first instance to the gracious preaching; at the second step, however, they turn aside; *they wondered* at these gracious words—out of this *mouth*. Instead of hearing simply to receive (*wondering* always denotes the opposite of this, as at chap. ii. 18, 47), they close their ears, and use only their eyes; they look at the mouth, and judge, according to appearance, a false judgment. They are like the blind, ver. 18, who suppose that they see; for their rule runs in perversion of the right one, *Not what, but who*. How must the Lord have restrained and concealed Himself during these eighteen long years? How must all the rays of His glory have been drawn in, as the carpenter's son, even the carpenter of Nazareth (Matt. xiii. 55; Mark vi. 3). Almost perplexed for a moment, as to whether it could be the same person and the same mouth, they here put the question, as being the first which after a variety of feelings and thoughts escapes their lips. *Is not this man the son of Joseph?* Compare, at a later period, John vi. 42. Thus St Luke compresses into a few words the entire reference of His ordinary descent and personality, suitably to the first impression which did not then find utterance in more copious terms: St Matthew and St Mark, on the other hand, on the recurrence of the angry, malicious feeling, thus consistently and firmly cherished, quite as truly and as naturally give us stronger and more copious terms. On this latter occasion a regular proof had to be obtained that the πόθεν of His wisdom and deeds could not be ἐξ οὐρανοῦ: His mother (after the death of His father) is mentioned as being poor and of no note; His brothers and sisters in this connection manifestly as the full brothers and sisters, the members of one and the same well-known family. "Mere common people, like ourselves, *all*

Hosted by Google

with us,—the brothers (mentioned by name) bring Him no particular honour,—as for the sisters we do not, at the moment, remember their names." Certainly by such *wondering* and *questioning* Nazareth involuntarily and unconsciously gives further *testimony*, though only for the good of others who believe, while they are hardened in anger and unbelief; their witness is *against* themselves.

The son of Joseph had walked till His thirtieth year blamelessly in friendship, humility, and obedience, with the favour of all; like the son of no other Nazarene, of no other Israelite, of no other man; and so as to excite in those who had right eyes and right hearts the presentiment that He was something higher than He appeared to be: this was the case with John the Baptist, after only slight intercourse with Him. But the village beggarly pride of the Nazarenes cannot at all comprehend the humility of the Great One; they are ready to say, with His brethren, "He who would be, or who is, of any note, will show himself as soon as possible to the world."[1] Thus the humanity of the Divine Saviour is incredible at first to all of us; and thereby we, in our turn, bear involuntary testimony to the condescending grace of God and to our own wickedness. *Like one of us*:—this cannot be anything particular. Thus Nazareth frankly confirms what other people say of it, John i. 46. *Whence* has this man this wisdom and these deeds? From his father and mother he has received no education, as his brothers and his sisters show; that he has not studied anywhere else is well known, Jo. vii. 15; consequently, as we do not know *whence he has* his learning, he has nothing that we can acknowledge.

Ver. 23. On this occasion, before the people are able to add more words to their first brief expression (which is rather *wondering* than *anger*), and to confirm themselves in their sin, the Lord, who has learned to know them through and through, anticipates them by a graciously forbearing expression of their thoughts. He who has proclaimed Himself to be the *Physician of the heart*, shows Himself, in proof and token of this, to be the *Searcher of the heart*. The

[1] Still more foolish would be the idea here that the Lord should have referred to or proved His miraculous conception. This, the greatest of all miracles, and mysteries, is assuredly not a foundation on which faith may build, but a fact to be apprehended by faith.

Hosted by Google

natural train of thought in the minds of these Nazarenes, according to ver. 22, was: Is he not like ourselves? And yet the Anointed of God, whom the Spirit sends and in whom He dwells? *Let him prove it to us!* Therefore the Lord says: πάντως, ye *will* say to Me—I know it well before you utter it, and I say it to you; *and assuredly*, in a certain measure, you have a right to say it. That He clothes it in a *proverbial saying*, is partly with a view to its being popularly understood, and partly by way of gracious excuse for them, in harmony with the human disposition which made this proverb.[1] As, in accordance with the prophetic text, He had announced the healing of the sick, He calls Himself a *physician;* but they understand this misapplied proverb only of bodily healing and help. We do not believe that it was intended to be taken in a strictly literal sense: "Let him work a miracle on *himself*,[2] make himself a rich instead of a poor man, a mighty instead of a lowly man;" in our opinion the σεαυτόν is to be explained by ἐν τῇ πατρίδι σου, the common way of applying proverbial sayings being to widen their range. The thoughts of the Nazarenes in their petty pride ran as follows: "As the son of Joseph art thou not ours? We have, at all events, a right to thee, if thou art anything, and art able to do anything; why then hast thou not begun among us with thy mighty works? But thou hast done this εἰς Καπερναοὺμ, *i.e.*, Capernaum has the honour. We were thy neighbours, and thou hast passed us by to make thyself of importance outside;—thou art, like many a one, a physician who will help others, but who can do nothing for himself or for his own house." The indefinite ὅσα is very well expressed by "what great things,"—for these will man for ever seek, instead of the humility of Christ, of which he has no conception. Half in a tone of exaggeration, and half also, perhaps, in *irony* (for it is as if the expression in the mouth of the Lord was their own), their ὅσα hints at flying rumours of what he had done in Capernaum, and on which they look with jealous eye: we see manifestly that it could represent only the single miracle wrought on the Nobleman's son; they do not appear as yet to have heard anything about the many miracles wrought at

[1] Only here in the New Testament is παραβολή used for a proverb, expressed in figurative language.

[2] As the words are again heard under the Cross.

Hosted by Google

Jerusalem,[1] in regard to which less offence would be taken, as a beginning made at the right place. Inasmuch, however, as they acknowledge ἠκούσαμεν—that they *had heard*—they bear testimony against themselves, that they might and should *have believed* even though they had not *seen* signs and wonders wrought before their own eyes. (Jo. iv. 48.) Mark how significantly the Lord here once more indirectly rejects the demand for miracles before it is made; as for Himself, He absolutely never offers a miracle in demonstration of His mission and preaching.

Ver. 24. The εἶπε δέ (St Luke frequently throws in such *formulae* in a continuous address) is meant to mark this proverbial saying as one of special note, one that had become well known, and which was afterwards repeated,—a saying used on the present occasion in the same sense in which it afterwards occurs at Jo. iv. 44. In St Matthew and St Mark this proverb (here used in reply to a proverb) is prosecuted into a still narrower circle, "and in his own house;" St Mark, in addition to this, and between the two expressions, inserts the clause, "and among his own kindred." The formula in St Mark, οὐκ ἔστι ἄτιμος εἰ μή, gives the strongest expression: "Is a Prophet even in other places, and generally, despised? I say unto you it is not so everywhere, and in comparison of the contempt with which he meets at home, scarcely anywhere at all; but if it be so nowhere else, yet it is certainly so here." The proverb about the physician who should save himself, is generally a human one: the proverb about the prophet, who is in no estimation at home, has also a general analogy for extraordinary men, and witnesses of the truth; but the Lord gives it rather an Israelitish range, pressing home the case. A prophet is a physician for the heart by means of the word. An ordinary prophet, such as those whom Israel hitherto had known, has, as a *man* gifted and sent by God, along

[1] The events at Cana, perhaps, they regarded as quite uncertain, not deserving of notice: this, at least, would seem to be assumed by the Lord. At all events the ὅσα ἠκούσαμεν we cannot regard (with Alford) as a sure mark of a later period. For, though we were to admit the force of his statement, in opposition to what we have said above, "that ὅσα could not have been applied to one miracle," it may have been the case that several miracles had been wrought at Capernaum, though only one is recorded. The only thing certain is that these could not have been wrought (as Lange asserts) *before* the *second* miracle in Galilee so specially recorded by St John.

Hosted by Google

with the official character, which he is acknowledged as bearing also, a human relationship also toward the immediate neighbourhood in which he has grown up, and here there is room for unbelief to take offence. In addition to his extraordinary capacity he bears also a common relationship. Now, the Lord humbly places Himself in this class of prophets; He desires not to take any higher position than what subjects Him to the common lot of prophets (as at Luke xiii. 33), when He rises to preach as one sent of God. In the οὐδεὶς δεκτός, no prophet is *accepted* (which is here quite as suitable for this first utterance as the stronger term ἄτιμος, used subsequently, was for the other), He already points, in passing, to the receiving and accepting *faith* which must bring the *soul* to the true Physician that He may help it.

Vers. 25–27. *The Scripture and its testimony to the truth*, which, and here especially *its historical incidents*, the Lord by His own example teaches all preachers carefully to notice and to use—the *Scripture* is more than proverb; it is itself the fountain of all those particularly Israelitish proverbs, the truth of which can be proved from it. The Lord, by the 24th verse, had advanced from the narrowest sense and circle in which the Nazarenes understood πατρίς, into the large field—*Israel*, the proper fatherland of the prophets. He might have mentioned the fate of Jeremiah in his own Anathoth (Jer. xi. 21, xii. 6), or something of the same kind, which, being on a small scale, might have been more like His own rejection by the Nazarenes; but, according to the Spirit who is in Him, He opposes to the Nazarenes' limited circle of vision a wide and comprehensive view of the subject. In this we see as before partly the mournful apology for them, that *they* acted not worse or otherwise than Israel at large had done; but we also see the earnest rebuking *truth*, which, as they have rejected His former kindness, He cannot now withhold. Elijah and Elisha are the two great prophets who stand at the proper commencement of prophetic antiquity; they are also the two great workers of miracles, whose miracles in many respects prefigured the miracles of the Lord (compare Matt. xiv. 20 with 2 Kings iv. 43, 44, and Luke vii. 15 with 1 Kings xvii. 23). He also will in truth feed the poor and cleanse the lepers. It is to these miracles of mercy that

Hosted by Google

He points; and not to the fire from heaven, or to the bears which destroyed the mockers. Not only through the same traditions as St James (Jas. v. 17) does He know the exact time how long the heaven was shut;[1] He knows it also from the revelation of the Spirit in whom He speaks; and further that Elias was not sent with similar aid to any other of the *many* widows in Israel at that time of oppression and distress. When He begins to speak and testify of this matter, He speaks as if all was luminous and sure before His eyes, yea, more than stands recorded in the narratives themselves. Ἐπὶ Ἐλισσαίου is a note of time, just as in a preceding passage ἐν ταῖς ἡμέραις Ἠλίου (compare Luke iii. 2; Mark ii. 26; Acts xi. 28); for the prophets were employed, like the kings and high priests, to indicate eras of time. That there were also many *lepers* as well as widows, was due to the sins of the time; and reference to this generally is made at 2 Kings vii. 3. The healing of Naaman, who also at first took offence and did not believe, leads back again to the *Physician*. By both these parallel histories, however (which very strikingly remind us of the Canaanitish woman of Sidon, and of the ruler at Capernaum), the design of the Lord is to deliver a genuine prophecy derived from the past and referring to the future. He foreannounces that Israel would not receive Him, its great Prophet and Physician; and, consequently, that His preaching of grace (ver. 18, 19) would, because of their unbelief, pass over to the Heathen. All this is well-known to Him before He preaches; and yet from the beginning He speaks as graciously as if He had nothing before Him but broken hearts. It is the manifestation of the opposite of this that first compels Him, ἐπ' ἀληθείας, to speak in any other strain.

This, however, was *the* truth which Nazareth and Israel, with incurable Jewish pride, will not hear; and which, on every

[1] This is not so exactly specified in 1 Kings xvii. 1, xviii. 1. A time of suffering, however, for Israel, was frequently thus measured out (compare Dan. vii. 25, xii. 7); and "the shutting up of the heavens" had been a specially threatened punishment from the time of 1 Kings viii. 35; Deut. xi. 17; hence Sir. xlviii. 3. Braune remarks very correctly that if the shutting, 1 Kings xvii. 1, was threatened at the beginning of the rain season, the half-year preceding would not be reckoned; and 1 Kings xviii. 1, is not inconsistent with the four half-years.

Hosted by Google

occasion, down to Acts xxii. 21, 22, xxviii. 25, calls forth their *wrath*. What happens here at Nazareth is again a symbolical prophecy for the country of all prophets, and of this the last great Prophet; it intimates, what St Luke throughout the whole of his two books is ever showing us, that the Gospel must pass over from the Jews to the Heathen. This is the first exception to the general glorification of the Lord, as He teaching in the synagogues; see above ver. 15. They do not suffer Him to speak further, they interrupt the worship of God by a general uproar. He allows Himself, as if He were a false prophet, who, now that He is put to the proof, cannot make good His pretensions, to be *cast* or *pushed* by the first outbreak of anger into the street; and even, still patiently, to be led to the high brow of the hill by the multitudes now prosecuting their object more quietly—the result of His patience—with the intention of casting Him down headlong. What fellow-townsmen are these of the Holy One of God! As His hour is not yet come, passing through the midst of them He goes His way. It is not meant that they were struck with blindness, that He became invisible, or that there was an external miracle. This is the very thing which the Evangelist means to deny by διελθὼν διὰ μέσου, *passing through the midst*. The Lord merely turns on them a look of majesty hitherto kept back; and they, receiving from Him at parting a *sign* of the power of His spirit, are restrained from touching Him, and compelled reverentially to make way for Him, right and left, as He moves along! "They stood—stopped—inquired—were ashamed—fled—separated," as Pfenninger, with striking pencil, paints the closing scene.[1]

PETER'S DRAUGHT OF FISHES AND HIS CALL.

(Luke v. 4–10; [Matt. iv. 19; Mark i. 17].)

In addition to what we have already said, Vol. i. p. 87–90, on the difference between the first call of the fishers of men and

[1] Robinson (Palestine iii. 421) commits a sad mistake when he supposes that Jesus took advantage of the narrow streets of the city to escape from their snares.

Hosted by Google

the Lord's present work and word in further confirming that call; and in addition, further, to what we have said in anticipation of our exposition of the latter, a few remarks must still be added, now that we have come to the immediate consideration of the narrative of St Luke by itself.[1] The whole history, from the first crowding of the people to hear the word of the Lord up to the time when those whom the Lord won over to be servants of the Word left all and followed Him, is throughout of a kind more eminently fitted for typical instruction than most other portions of the Gospel narratives. Few preachers have ever been able to abstain altogether from allegorising here. But our business is only with the words of the Lord. We have to remark *first* on ver. 4: He commands them *to launch out into the deep*, partly to exhibit the miraculous draught of fishes as contrary to all the rules of fishing; and partly also to withdraw from the eyes of the people the miracle, which was a sign given to the Apostles in confirmation of the promise accompanying their call. Further, we have to define in all its fulness the meaning of the miracle which accompanied the word. It was designed by our Lord, first, to be a σημεῖον, *a sign*, standing in most direct connection with the preceding preaching of the word of God; *a symbol* of the new call for Peter, in which the old calling is consecrated and exalted by being made a prophetic type of the new. It was, secondly, a figurative *prophecy* of the blessing attached to preaching, of the benediction which should for ever rest upon His servants' labours, which shall never cease to operate. It was, finally, and subordinately, a *sedative* to the fear of earthly need in following Jesus. These three points in the history appear to us to be intimately united in one whole. In regard to the first, it is figuratively taught us that the casting out (the letting down) of our nets, our labouring the whole night through, is productive, as Peter's word shows, of no good without the blessing of God; while, on the other hand, it cannot be dispensed with, for the Lord, in promising the draught, at the

[1] We may here correct the mistake of Neander, who supposes that a sense of sin so suddenly called forth in the case of Peter is conceivable only at an early period, at the beginning of his connection with Jesus. On the contrary, such a state of mind is the result of deep experience, when a man is brought into close communion with the Holy One.

Hosted by Google

same time commands to cast out the net, and sends the fishes into the net, but not directly into the boat. In regard to the second, we see that the word of promise, εἰς ἄγραν, appended to the command, is parallel to the ἔσῃ ζωγρῶν, which afterwards conveys a similar assurance of the result. The third beautifully follows as a consequence from the fact that the Lord immediately and superabundantly recompensed Simon's loan of his boat for preaching; consequently, as He is now sending out Simon himself to preach, He will not suffer him as an unrequited labourer to suffer want. We may notice also as important, how prominently the difference is brought forward between the ὑμᾶς of Matt. iv. 19, and of the whole narrative before us, and the address to Simon as the foremost and the representative of His disciples. It is for this reason that the Lord selected out of the two ships the one which belonged to Simon and entered into it; it is for this reason that the singular address, launch (thou) into the deep precedes the plural, cast (you) out your nets; it is for this reason, finally, that the other expression, ver. 10, is addressed in the first instance to Simon the sinful *man*,[1] although his equally astonished associates have already received a similar call.

The general expression, "fishers of men," ἁλιεῖς ἀνθρώπων, of the earlier call, is modified by the ζωγρῶν, a word chosen designedly by St Luke as the corresponding expression. For, men are to be captured for the kingdom of God; not for slaughter (2 Pet. ii. 12), but to be preserved *alive* (and this is exactly the meaning of ζωγρεῖν in Josh. ii. 13), brought to a willing obedience, and thus made serving captives. We may compare 2 Tim. ii. 16, where, though in a bad sense, as much of this application remains as is sufficient to let us see that the expression here denotes the wonderful capture of souls, for a free and willing obedience, by means of the miraculous Gospel-net. *Henceforth:* from this time, when thou a sinful man, in full knowledge of thy sinfulness, now becomest My disciple; and comest to be prepared by Me for the higher fishing-work, which also, as a work of faith, must be learned step by step! We may thus in general draw

[1] It has been correctly observed that ἀνὴρ ἁμαρτωλός is an acknowledgment of personal, special sinfulness, and not merely of that which is common to man: ἄνθρωπος would have been used to denote this.

Hosted by Google

the contrast between this call and their former calling now abandoned, without descending (with Bengel) to anything so minute as the approaching mission of the Twelve.

THE RAISING OF THE YOUNG MAN AT NAIN.

(Luke vii. 13, 14.)

Ebrard, from a mere oversight, has erroneously assigned this history to the very day after the healing recorded in vers. 1–10. In this he was influenced by the reading ἐν τῇ ἑξῆς, without paying any attention to the important variation τῷ ἑξῆς;—see immediately again chap. viii. 1, καὶ ἐγένετο ἐν τῷ καθεξῆς, and over against this, chap. ix. 37, the next day ἡμέρᾳ, as we have already pointed out, Vol. ii. p. 74. External authorities do not, indeed, decide (the Syr. ליומא is rather opposed to the Vulgate *deinceps*); still, there are other considerations in abundance. Even Schleiermacher, to whom, on this occasion, we may appeal as an impartial critic, characteristically decided that chap. vii. 10 is the conclusion of a connected "collection," and gave the preference in ver. 11 to the τῷ as being a *wider* mark of time. Bengel has decided in the same way; and for the same harmonistic reasons which we are constrained to own as important. For, if the resurrection at Nain, which at all events is placed vers. 18, 19 in intimate connection with the message from John the Baptist, is to be understood as having happened on the very day after the event recorded at vers. 1–10, the narrative will contain many things irreconcilable and inconceivable. For instance, the young man at Nain must have been raised before Jairus' daughter. But, first, when we consider the answer of the Lord to John, "*the dead are raised*," we can hardly think that He would use this lofty language concerning one single event; it gives us the impression that such a thing must have happened at least more than once.[1] Secondly, the whole history of the daughter of Jairus; the fact that her father, after hearing that her death had

[1] We cannot deal with the Word so wantonly as Schleiermacher does, who supposes that the "Compiler" inserted the narrative here in order to do justice to (to find a suitable place for?) νεκροὶ ἐγείρονται.

Hosted by Google

actually taken place, does not venture to entertain any further hope; with all the details of our Lord's conduct and words; lose their luminous simplicity of truth if we do not regard *that* as the first instance of a resurrection—that is, if any similar fact had already publicly taken place at Nain. We refer, therefore, to our exposition on that passage.[1]—St Luke, we infer, who has so many transpositions, hastens forward here to (vers. 11–35) the events of a later period, intending afterwards to bring up the parables, the storm, the Gadarenes, Jairus, etc. This is not applicable, however, as far as ver. 50, for the anointing stands again *undefined* for the *general* καθεξῆς, chap. viii. 1.

We have no wish to enter deeply into the harmony; but feel compelled at times, in vindication of important Sayings, to point out the place which they really occupy. The two short Sayings of the Lord which the history before us contains are so incomparably sublime in their simplicity, that we are almost afraid of injuring them by any added remark; yet the believing reader, coming to such wonderful words, feels the need of a suggestive hint. We see, in the first place, and very remarkably, the deep humility and absence of all ostentation with which *the Lord* (ver. 13), announcing His miraculous aid wrought by the power of God, clothes in the most general expression of human comfort, the consolatory address in which His purpose is announced; and then, in language as simple as words can make it, commands the dead man who was being carried to his grave to *rise*. Pitiable is the infatuation which dreams that men could have invented anything like this if it had not really so happened. We feel as we read that the simplicity and humility of the Son of Man, who is always like Himself, must turn to the exhibition of His majesty and glory. The coming up to the gate of the city, the seeing the great grief of the widow sympathised with by all the people, the allowing the grief to sink into His own heart, the comfort imparted, the aid granted—all together is quite natural to Him, because He is directed at the moment by the Father.

[1] We would almost venture to suppose, though this is merely a matter of feeling, that Christ did not proceed to His *first* miracle of raising the dead unsolicited by man. That He could do even this, and that He should do it, was to Him before this time a matter of trial; and this trial He was now about, for the first time, to make.

Hosted by Google

For certainly He did not on every occasion perform a similar miracle when He saw a funeral, or met one on the road; as assuredly people in affliction did not, on all occasions, venture to cry out to Him (it was natural that they should not) to restore to them the dead. They scarcely at any time venture to expect from Him *this*, the highest manifestation of His power,—a manifestation which even at the very moment of the triumph over death fills our minds with *dread* (ver. 16), for we are poor slaves of death. Even the sisters of Lazarus had no thought of this. But this poor widow is counted worthy; the hour has come for the manifestation of the works of God; the Lord instantly knows and feels this, and rejoices in the opportunity of giving expression to His sympathy in word and in deed.

We do not read that He bade the procession to halt. He has no desire by the exhibition of His might either to terrify or to dazzle the people; but He stoops down soothingly to the afflicted widow, whose heartrending weeping He heard at once from the midst of the throng. It is not for the sake of bringing back the dead to a vain earthly life, but for the sake of comforting the living, that He works this miracle. The *words* here alone unfold the meaning of the great deed. The Lord does not begin by saying, "Stand up, thou dead man!" "Weep not" is the first word which He utters; *this is the only reason* why He works the miracle, its significance lies *here*. Immediately after the ἰδών, before the προσελθών follows (ver. 14), with soft approach, with tender salutation, and with strong promise, He meets the widow with one simple affecting word, "*Weep not!*" This time, He uses only the first half of that former expression of comfort, Luke viii. 52; for the second half, in its reference to the dead, would have been here in this public appearance too much. Could He have begun with more of lowly sublimity, of simple majesty, of tender power, more like one whose nature was at once *human* and *Divine?* Assuredly, He does not blame or reprove the *weeping* of the deeply-afflicted woman, which the Father had appointed to her for her good: *this* weeping was quite different from the noisy weeping of Mark v. 39; and His address here has nothing of the tone of the rebuke which He uttered then. *His* word is very different from the miserable comfort of the men who say what He said to the afflicted, but can do nothing else.

Hosted by Google

Weep *no more*, weep *no longer!* His design is to say this as a kind promise: undoubtedly He says it in such a way that the word carries with it its consolatory power, as the word that follows addressed to the dead carries with it its quickening power. *Weep not!* Gladly would He bring this to the whole human race in all its affliction and in all its sorrows of mortality: He is proclaiming this even now in the act of applying it to the widow; as a testimony of His boundless love and might to all mourners in fair *Nain*, which is still bringing out its dead, to all afflicted ones in Israel and on the earth. To how many since that day has the Spirit made it the source of consolation, and in doing so given them to taste beforehand the full import of that last great saying: *Weep not!* Rev. v. 3.

This one word is enough. Silently He approaches, silently He touches the bier, only beckoning to the men and making preparation for the great moment. There is a presentiment of what He intends to do; at least no one dares to offer any resistance to the extraordinary interruption; the bearers (advancing according to Jewish fashion with rapid steps) stand still; soon the whole multitude from Nain, and that which was accompanying Him into Nain, stops in its progress. Not till all have stood still and are waiting, does He speak His second word. He utters it in a tone not louder than is necessary to enable all to hear; but loud enough for this, because the glory of the Father is now about to appear in the Son before these men. The three resurrection-words, which are recorded in the Gospels, are very similar. In the first the *damsel*, here the *young man*, finally Lazarus by name, in the presence of the great crowd, are addressed, that the dead may hear the voice of the Son of God who calls them as if they were living:—then the "arise" for the two who are laid out, and at last the imperative "come forth," to him who had been laid in the grave. Whether the σοὶ λέγω was added by St Luke, as it is by St Mark v. 41 (compare Luke viii. 54), we do not know for certain; the above analogy might lead us to suspect that it was. Assuredly its import, even though it had not been expressly uttered, is found in the single word קוּם. There is no calling upon God, as in 1 Kings xvii. 21; but the most simple command in His own might. There is not even the touching, or taking hold of the dead by the hand (as in the case

Hosted by Google

of the damsel); He touched only the bier. There is no "*Live again*," or "*Come back from the dead*," or anything like this; no,—only the simple "*Arise*," as if the young man were asleep.

And He gave him to his mother. St Luke thus directs our attention to two Old Testament histories, 1 Kings xvii. 23; 2 Kings iv. 36; and perhaps also indicates that the Lord uttered a *third* most gracious word to the mother (which is omitted here as being addressed only to the *individual*), as in the ancient history: *Take away thy son.* This is more probable than the other, "Behold thy son liveth," which the Lord already appropriated, Jo. iv. 50. He who does this shall assuredly restore also to all separated ones (whom the kingdom of the Father shall unite), those whom they have loved; that in the general restoration to life there may be also a restoration to personal recognition and special fellowship of love. As certainly as there will be a resurrection will there be a seeing again, and a having again: this also is promised and guaranteed in the three resurrections, typical as these are of the general resurrection.

THE WOMAN WHO WAS A SINNER AND SIMON THE PHARISEE.

(Luke vii. 40–50.)

St Luke, the experienced *Physician* of souls and accomplished *Painter* of sacred scenes, gives us here one of his most precious histories, the sweet kernel of which poor sinners never will be able to exhaust. The narrative, because of its very glory and importance, stands without any special chronological or topographical note; it is designed to bring generally before our very eyes the Lord in the wisdom of His love, as He receives sinners and puts Pharisees to shame. We must at the outset designate as a piece of very unhappy and shallow criticism, the view of Ebrard, viz., that St Luke intended to represent this weak woman as a contrast to John the Baptist, who, though a mighty prophet, yet did not completely understand Christ. When will ye cease, beloved brethren, to cast reproach upon the greatest man

Hosted by Google

born of women, who needed only to understand Isa. xl. and liii. to keep him right in regard to the "Lamb of God?" Assuredly the Baptist had had enough of such sinners before him, in the light of God's presence, to render it impossible that any one of them should surpass him in knowledge of the Saviour (and of his *salvation in the forgiveness of sins*, Luke i. 77). It is not as a contrast to the question of John, but as an example and as an illustration of ver. 34, in the answer of the Lord (compare also ver. 30), that St Luke places this narrative where it is. No simple and intelligent reader of the Gospels can imagine that this anointing is identical with that of Mary, which took place at Bethany,—an idea which the acute Schleiermacher undertook to defend. The reasons against this are so powerful that one is ashamed to mention the subject. Finally, this woman can by no means be Mary Magdalene; whom the same Evangelist cannot be supposed to mention, immediately after chap. viii. 2, without any intimation, and as a new person.

Jesus called sinners to Him; and allowed Himself to be called or invited even by Pharisees (chap. xi. 37, xiv. 1), even by enemies who lay in wait for Him, or by coldhearted inquisitive persons. That this Simon (not the Leper who had been healed) had been laid under obligation by any act of kindness or miracle wrought in his behalf, there is nothing recorded to lead us to imagine. His behaviour (ver. 44–46) is inconsistent with such a supposition; nor is it necessary to enable us to understand the parallel drawn between him and the woman. The sinner, however, may be called by us *the sinner*, without a name, that every soul who reads of her may think of himself as standing in her place. She *was* a sinner;[1] up to this time (in Pharisaic language) she had been so; and she was still a sinner before the eyes of the world, although before God the sanctifying change had already begun to take place, through repentance, forgiveness, and love in return for forgiveness. Her great love, however, still remained humble, scarcely laying hold of consolation, in penitence. She had become in her own eyes a great sinner, and this is the real difference between her and the Pharisee: this was

[1] And not merely according to the false assumption of a late reporter of the narrative, as Schleiermacher determines!

Hosted by Google

what brought her to Jesus. At all events she had sought and inquired after Him, as St Luke intimates in his ἐπιγνοῦσα; it is His personal presence alone that is again desired, because (mediately or immediately) she had been awakened, converted, humbled, and certainly also comforted by His word. Had the Lord's invitation at Matt. xi. 28–30 (if St Luke's narrative here is in chronological order) at a former period completely arrested her attention and drawn her to the Saviour? It may have been so; yet the καθεξῆς, chap. viii. 1, does not determine anything; and we are in general ignorance of the whole matter, as to what city it was,[1] etc. The Evangelist finely avoids saying that the sinner *came* to Jesus; this is self-understood under the pressure of her first love, seeking to be assured of the love of the Saviour, and in the deep contrition of the repentance which has already met with acceptance, while struggling to obtain a sense of it. In this marvellous intermediate and transition state of a soul turning to God, and under the influence of strong feeling, do we *see* the woman, if either our own experience, or the experience of others, has given us eyes to see her. Repenting sinners have generally a twofold trial to undergo; the mockery of their former associates, and the proud contempt of the virtuous and pious —as we see in the analogous case of baptized Jews. The second of these trials is the more painful of the two; and in this latter test the deep earnestness of the woman is seen. She shuns not the Pharisee's house: she heeds not the eyes that will meet her there; for she knows well that where Jesus is present, no one will dare to thrust her out. She has brought a vessel with ointment; for the purpose of honouring the Lord with what, during her sinful life, she had misapplied to the purposes of vanity and shame.[2] Not only is this ointment a demonstration of her love and devotion; she intends that it should also be an acknowledgment of her return to God, and of her renunciation of her evil ways. In token of her deep sorrow, her hair, which but for this

[1] The article ἐν τῇ πόλει refers only to the preceding τὴν οἰκίαν: in the same city where was the house of this certain Pharisee, and, *therefore*, she was well known to him as a notorious character. Meyer, without any reason, supposes the city to have been Capernaum; Wieseler, Nain, etc.

[2] We do not, however, see why (according to Braune) the ointment should be the "wages of iniquity."

Hosted by Google

would have been well dressed, is dishevelled: all in simplicity, and from the depth of her heart. *She stands* behind at His feet —having pressed forward thus far with animation and eagerness, —suddenly she is cast down, hesitates, and *weeps*;—" not the lips now, but, what is far better, the eyes, give expression to that of which the heart is full."[1] This is all that she can do, all that she ventures to do, all that she says; but it is enough, and it leads on to everything else. The tears which fall upon the feet of the Lord open to her the shortest road by which she can come nearer to her purpose. For she must dry His feet; and takes her hair for this purpose, as slaves were wont to do when washing their masters' feet. Now she has *touched* them, and this draws out her whole heart to *kiss* these feet. Soon would she have forgotten all about the ointment; but at length she brings it out, not venturing to approach His *head*.[2] And last of all, while she pours herself out in the tears of blessedness, which express her sense of the guilt of all her sin, at the very feet of the Saviour of sinners, she thinks of nothing, and of nobody around her, except only of *Him*, who receives all in silence, without as yet arresting her by even a single glance. What more could she have? What comfort to her soul is this! Therefore the Lord does not suddenly cut short these happy moments.

A sight to give joy to the angels in heaven! But the Pharisee sees with other eyes, and has other thoughts within himself. He does not express with his lips the import of these thoughts: there is still something good in him. But his doubt whether this Jesus be what He professes, draws its inferences, and in doing so assumes premisses that are altogether false. The position is not *in the present case* a false one, that a prophet ought at once to know all men who come near him, and to understand everything that happens to him. For although Elisha, for example

[1] P. D. Burk, in his excellent and suggestive Treatise on this narrative; the overdrawn character of many of its remarks we have no disposition to find fault with.

[2] Which idea pleases us better than the usual one, that she anointed the feet as a mark of her deep reverence. With this woman there is no such thing as ceremony; everything comes naturally from her heart as the events emerge.

Hosted by Google

(2 Kings iv. 27), might make the confession, "The Lord has concealed the matter from me, has not revealed it to me," the application of this to Jesus is a very different thing. Simon is quite correct in supposing that if Jesus be *such* a prophet as the people take Him to be, and as He Himself gives out that He is, something else might be expected from Him.[1] But the bluntly assumed axiom of the Pharisee is fundamentally false (an axiom which, if true, must keep God and man eternally separated), "that a holy man can have no contact with sinners." Why then has the Saviour had so much intercourse with the Pharisees? It is also fundamentally false that this woman is "a sinner," and, on the other hand, that he who has invited Jesus to his house is no sinner! Finally, how cold and unfeeling is his language, when the word "touch" is all he has to say for the weeping, kissing, anointing of the woman; her *loving*, as the Lord afterwards rightly calls it.[2] O Simon, wert thou not a poor *sinner*, Jesus would not have come to thy table; had not this woman been a *penitent* sinner, she would not have sought Him in thy house. O that thou knewest what a *Saviour* He is; how He knows thee and her—her repentance, thy pride! But all this Simon shall soon learn. The Lord suddenly arrests his attention, and gives him an opportunity of having something said to him by the "prophet." A very simple parable leads him—with lightning conviction, but with forbearing kindness—to the main point which his thoughts had left out of view. He must reply: he judges correctly; but he does not know that he has judged himself. Then comes the interpretation of the parable, opening his eyes, and setting him and the woman, in three clear contrasts, before the company at table, as before God. The parable does certainly put the Pharisee to open shame; yet the lesson of instruction turning back again to the parable in ver. 47 is expressed forbearingly and graciously; instead of *nothing*, a "*little*" is left to the Pharisee, while to the sinner

[1] It is not at all probable that Simon had previously believed in the prophetical character of Christ, and that he was now perplexed about Him. This idea is quite inconsistent with his very uncourteous conduct from the commencement, as afterwards described.

[2] Alford says finely: "Touching—this is all that the Pharisee fixes on: his offence is merely technical and ceremonial."

Hosted by Google

her "*much forgiveness*" is indirectly expressed in her "*much love.*"

Ver. 40. Even from the beginning the design of the Saviour in entering upon the conversation is not merely to bless the poor Pharisee with the knowledge of salvation in the forgiveness of sins, but to protect the woman from the censure which was about to break out against her. His first word closely borders upon the humble modesty of the guest, as if He intended to say—"May I, Simon my host, speak a word to thee?" But His holy dignity does not permit Him to express Himself literally in these terms; for He is, and in every company He must ever be, the Prophet who has something to *speak* to the world, and—more than a prophet—to speak it in His own name. In the first place, to *thee* (not as yet to the woman, she may go on quietly weeping, and kissing, and anointing!)—in reply to thy present thoughts, which I read in thy countenance; to thee, thou *Simon*, thou man, whom I know and address by name, knowing well what kind of man thou art generally and at this present moment. *I—to thee —something* to say; this arrests his attention, prepares, and impresses him: *What* thinkest thou I have to say to thee? Canst thou not observe what I *have* for thee?[1] The man thus impressed could not but yield assent to the *Master*, in a brief enforced expression, which shall prevent him from afterwards complaining of the severe lesson.

Vers. 41–43. And what a lesson of the perfect Teacher, giving, without lengthened preaching and discourse, in most pointed, brief, impressive touches, all the instruction which the case required. In the form of a convivial parable, which a Rabbi invited to an entertainment was always at liberty to give without any breach of politeness, He represents the sins of men before God by a common popular figure, that of a debt to be paid. "*Two debtors*"—this is the first expression: that is, thou and this woman; that is, the man who despises his fellow-sinner, and that fellow-sinner himself. Thou sayest in thy heart, "*She is a sinner:*" I have to say to thee, "Ye are *both* sinners before God,"

[1] This, rightly applied as coming from the mouth of the Lord, would, at the present day, be a powerful text, and enough for any man: *I—to thee—something—to say! Shall I say it? Or canst thou not, wilt thou not, say it to thyself?*

Hosted by Google

in this respect essentially alike; ye are both insolvent; and bankruptcy is the same, whether of much or little. But, although in the deepest sense of the truth every one without distinction is guilty of much in the presence of the Supreme Judge, and yet the proud man and the hypocrite even more guilty than other sinners, yet the Lord, in the exercise of tender forbearance, condescends, at the beginning, to the Pharisee's way of viewing the subject; which, when looked at externally, and at first sight, has in it apparent truth. Conceiving thyself in company with this woman *in the presence of God* (a great step this from one's own thoughts about himself), art thou not conscious that thou art not perfectly holy; knowest thou not *some* sins, however little they may be, which the grace of God has *forgiven* thee? Then you are alike, with every admitted difference. He *forgave* them both (ἐχαρίσατο, comp. Col. ii. 13)—this is the great point, the whole process between God and man; in which every pair of individuals stand by each other's side on a footing of equality. O with what kindness does He anticipate and allure the Pharisee, whose sin is already really forgiven, according to 2 Cor. v. 19! And what *consolation* does He provide for the listening woman! *Say* (an εἰπέ for His εἰπέ); I will not merely teach thee, thine own knowledge shall decide the simple case: Which now will *love* Him more? That is, which will be *bound to do so*, by the new obligation arising from the remission of the debt? which will be so *disposed* and *able* from natural gratitude, and so really *love* Him more? finally (and this is the last point), which will be *allowed* to love Him more?[1] Will not the creditor receive the larger gratitude from the man to whom he has remitted the larger sum? This would have been amply enough if Simon had had open ears:—"the *touching* of this woman is an expression of her most sincere gratitude; it is her much *love* for the forgiveness of her many sins: and should it be repelled by God, or the prophet of His grace?" Simon perhaps observed something, but certainly nothing clearly: otherwise he would have been silent from shame, or would have said, "Master, thou art in the right, I have been wanting." On the other hand he replies promptly, with stately

[1] Bolten reads here with strange absurdity: Which would be most full of adulation?

Hosted by Google

confidence, as if this parable had nothing to do with him, "I judge" (ὑπολαμβάνω, compare Acts ii. 15)—it appears to me that the case is very simple and the affair very natural; the more of forgiveness there is, so much the more is there of love and gratitude.[1] Upon this the Lord speaks kindly, "Thou hast now judged correctly, more correctly than before; but even now, alas, more correctly than thou yet knowest; thou hast judged thyself, for thou art the man with the *little* sin and *little* love."

Vers. 44–46. If it had not been necessary, the Lord would certainly not have proceeded fully to expose and put to shame the Pharisee. But nothing else will suffice: and Simon probably did not lay even this to heart. He now *turned to the woman*, although speaking to Simon; He now casts a look of benediction upon the penitent and loving woman, still without speaking a word, in order that she might slowly arrive at the full enjoyment of His grace. Now He praises and brings into notice the despised creature in the house which only her regard for Jesus made her dare to enter. *Seest* thou this woman? now with right eyes, as heretofore with false? Look upon her; thou hast, properly speaking, not seen her yet—look upon her in the light of the parable, and of thine own correct reply: see, she is truly no longer a great sinner, but one who loveth much; *i.e.*, a great saint, in contrast with thee, in thy coldness and pride. The sight of a penitent sinner should bring the proud saint to confession. Whether the Saviour had become acquainted with the life and character of the woman on a former occasion, or whether He now saw all in the Spirit, we know not for certain: there is at least no reason for assuming this on every such occasion as this. In the present instance, it appears that He drew the inference from the great love of the woman, in the same way in which He directed Simon to draw it. "I came *into thy house!*" Possessing, as He did, the dignity of the Son of God, He reckons this favour done to his host as a favour from God, for which he

[1] Others (whom Braune follows) understand a wavering, not fully outspoken reply: I consider—*i.e.*, probably, yes, it might be so. But ὑπολαμβάνειν (like διαλαμβάνειν) *to assume, to hold*, never denotes uncertainty, but rather, and more frequently, a fixed, firmly held judgment. Thus Acts ii. 15, it is "As ye decide," or answer (vers. 12, 13); as ye explain the appearance.

Hosted by Google

ought to have manifested more gratitude, for which he should have bestowed a little more honour upon his holy guest. But what a poor counterpart does his conduct in this respect form to the expressions of love which had been witnessed on the part of the woman! Three contrasts in succession show this in the clearest light of truth. "Thou hast not remembered even that most common, timehonoured usage of hospitality, the washing of the feet of the man who hath travelled to thy house[1]—(an act of hospitality shown by Laban even to the servants of Abraham); —this woman hath performed this duty for Me with her *tears*, her tears of penitence, the noblest of all kinds of water,—a duty which thou neglectedst, and for her performance of which thou shouldst have given her thanks. Thou hast cautiously abstained from giving Me a *kiss*,[2] that the world might not regard thee as too intimate a friend, or as a disciple; but this woman from the beginning[3] till now hath *not ceased* to kiss My feet." The very obtrusiveness of love is praised, not blamed. "Some one has sarcastically said—If my servant were to come and fall upon

[1] This is so very striking that many have endeavoured, very erroneously, to read the words as a question: Hast thou not given me water? hast thou not given me a (ceremonial) kiss? Others suppose that the custom could not have been a general, constant one, as Simon would scarcely have intended to be absolutely uncourteous. But, on the other hand, it is manifest that it is only the most common respect and not anything special for His own person that the Lord desired.

[2] Although we do not read of it anywhere except in the case of Judas, it is improbable that *no one* (as Bengel supposes) had ever given Jesus the customary "kiss of reverence, of greeting, and of farewell," according to the classification of the Rabbinical writers at a later period. The Lord on this occasion graciously invites men to do this; gives it to be understood that He expected it. The kiss of Judas was only in accordance with the general custom of the disciples. The Lord does not keep Himself aloof from such expressions of affection, or from such salutations on the part of any. He does not even say to the hypocritical Pharisee, "Thou hast no right to this."

[3] The reading εἰσῆλθεν is to be preferred to εἰσῆλθον. Still even this is not to be taken literally; it merely means, "from the beginning." *She came hither*—this was not to be forgotten in her praise. Further, we cannot altogether conclude, with Alford, from the ἀφ' ἧς εἰσῆλθον, that the woman had entered along with Jesus, accompanying Him and under His protection; for, ver. 37, ἐπιγνοῦσα ὅτι ἀνάκειται points this way only by a forced construction.

Hosted by Google

my neck and say, O how I have loved thee, Master! I should teach him a very different lesson. He thus threw mockery upon the love of man to God, and even upon God Himself, who has commanded such love from man. But praised be God, who condescends to our lowliness from infinite Majesty." (Burk). The Lord Jesus receives the expressions of love and honour with equal dignity and humility: He would have suffered Himself to be kissed even by the false Simon, as He does not withdraw His feet from the tears of the woman who was a sinner. He is so humble in His majesty, and so majestic in His humility, that —shall we say like a *child*, or like a *sovereign*—He complains before a whole company of men, who were watching His words, that certain marks of respect had been culpably withheld from Him: and every one must be made to feel that He does this not for His own sake, but for the sake of men. He is not afraid to speak of these things explicitly and strongly, when the conduct of the woman furnishes Him with the points of contrast: her tears remind Him of the omission of the washing of His feet; her kisses of the kiss withheld; finally, her ointment very naturally of the oil with which the host ought to have honoured the head of his guest. But this Simon probably meant no more in his invitation than to gratify his curiosity in regard to this pretended prophet, to examine him closely with a view of ascertaining whether he were really a prophet: it can scarcely be supposed (for of this the history gives no hint) that he intended to make a suitable acknowledgment for some favour received. He keeps himself, however, very discreetly on his guard; not only avoiding every extravagance of feeling (for there is nothing in his heart to flow over), but carrying his reserve rather too far. A striking picture of those cold, stiff "worshippers of God,"—who give at the most a half reverence[1] to their Creator and good Father, or even it may be to the "Redeemer,"—he supports Jesus before the world, and yet will not underlie the suspicion of any particular love for Him. This the Lord Jesus lays open to him: for in His mind to love or to hate *Himself* was to love or to hate *the Father*. The design of the Lord is not to recommend

[1] I once saw, in an advertisement of a watering-place, that a church for the worship of God was to be found in its neighbourhood "for those who should feel any necessity to show their reverence to the Creator."

Hosted by Google

such people to show at least a little more dissimulation: in this respect He has been frequently misunderstood. He takes the man as he is inside and out; and rather turns His censure of him into comparative praise, that he had acted so as to show himself to be what he really was. It is obvious that the Lord might have censured him in more severe terms, and might have put him to a yet deeper shame: let it be observed, in particular, that not one word is said of the sin of harsh judgment against the woman. He confines Himself as tenderly as possible to the manifest relation between the two sinners, the one of whom is inclined unrighteously to condemn the great love of the other.

Ver. 47. This word is to be understood only in strict connection with the *parable*, the application of which it now conclusively introduces. It is neither more nor less than a convincing inference from the great love of the woman, as seen before their eyes, to the already past forgiveness of her many sins—an inference quite legitimate according to the foregoing premises. "Her sins, which are *many* (the five hundred pence), are *forgiven her;* so that thou mayest no longer reproach her with them, or desire that I should not permit myself to be touched by her as a wicked sinner. *Whence* do we know this, good Simon? Canst thou not know it as well as I, without any such special knowledge of the heart as belongs to a prophet? Thou hast already conceded to me the main point; and, as *thou seest*, she loveth much." Let us be on our guard, however, against the Popish perversion of the way of salvation, which has laid eager hold of this saying; let us take care not to approach that perversion by any strange exposition of "receptive love," or something of this kind, to be presupposed in faith, in order to the forgiveness of sins. Here, alas, many students of Scripture have gone astray. Neander speaks strangely of the faith of the woman being sound because it proceeded from love, which is a perversion of language; he speaks also of a concealed fire of love present in her heart, even in her state of depravity, and only choked and depressed by the power of her sin. Olshausen had led the way with the strange exegesis of a receptive activity of mind, an analogous fountain of receptive love in the root of the innermost life, in order to her being able to believe in forgiveness: to this, however, the πολύ does not very well cor-

Hosted by Google

respond. According to Lange, the Lord was pleased to call *the ardent desire* of the woman *love*, by means of which the forgiveness had been imparted; in this way, moreover, satisfying the Pharisee's sense of right (by a kind of *meritum congrui et condigni?*), Steinmeyer preaches in the same way about a love of ardent desire, longing for forgiveness, as having been present in this special case; and to this he would limit the application of the Saying.[1] We must express our astonishment that such men as these could be so far prejudiced as to entertain such varied interpretations of a text which is in itself an exceedingly clear one. For, nothing is more certain, according to the whole connection as it lies before us, than the inferential force of the ὅτι in the passage;[2] nothing is more simple than the "*argumentum non a causa sed ab effectu*," which the Lord here makes use of, as when one says (to speak with Braune), "the sun is risen (it must have risen), *for* it is broad day." How can the aorist ἠγάπησε occasion any difficulty? It merely sums up into one the particulars which had been described (vers. 44–46) in pure preterites. "Her much love and thy coldness and heartlessness have both a good reason." The expositor who would place the love before the forgiveness contradicts the parable (in which ἀγαπήσει is the *consequence*); and moreover destroys the contrast, which in this case would run, But who loves little shall be forgiven little. V. Gerlach's language, speaking of this perverted exposition, is not less true than strong: "An unworthy disfiguring of the beautiful story, in the very spirit of Simon." What in our case, who have nothing to pay, may precede forgiveness, cannot at the most be more than an understanding and a receiving of the love of God, on the part of a heart susceptible thereof; but this is by no means the full meaning of the word ἀγαπᾶν. The Lord says—what we have before our eyes in 1 Tim. i. 13–15,—The more sin in past time, the more rich is the grace in forgiveness, with faith and love. The mockery of the world

[1] See in opposition to this an admirable review in Tholuck's Litt. Anzeiger 1848 p. 196.

[2] Glassius Phil. Sacra ed. Dathe, page 535, does not introduce this passage for כִּי, γάρ or ὅτι, but among others, Jo. viii. 44, x. 26; 1 Cor. x. 5; 1 Jo. iii. 14. At least the last is a most perfect parallel to the passage before us. Lücke's remark on it is: Brotherly love is a *sign*, a *proof*, of living faith.

Hosted by Google

runs, Young whores, old beadwomen; but the truth of God is, Great sinners, great saints. "This is," as Roos says, "the great paradox, the wonderful secret of the abounding riches of grace, which out of the greatest guilt can prepare for itself the greatest glory." The *major* for the Lord's syllogism had been already granted in the parable by Simon,—The more forgiveness, the more love. The Lord has given an ocular demonstration of the *minor* with His question, "Seest thou what this woman hath done? Is there not there a πολύ ἠγάπησε? Canst thou not see it as I show it to thee?" The *conclusion* is expressed; "οὗ χάριν λέγω σοι, from this I conclude that her hitherto many sins have been forgiven—and this was what I had specially to say to thee (ver. 40)." [1] We may still further observe how the Lord now half revokes and corrects the συγκατάβασις of the kindly begun parable, as if Simon had *sinned* only a little. He does not say, "But to whom *the* little, *his own* little, αἱ ὀλίγαι αὐτοῦ, have been forgiven," but merely, "to whom ὀλίγον ἀφίεται, little has been *forgiven;*" *i.e.*, the man who has received little forgiveness of *the many* sins, (which he as well as the other, like every man, has,) has merely derived loss from this imaginary advantage; he remains, alas! a man with little gratitude, and with little love, in contrast to those great saints who were once great sinners. Still, however, even this word is characterized by great forbearance and patience, for Simon's conscience might have answered: O Lord, thou sayest not enough, nothing has been forgiven to me, therefore I love thee not at all.[2] Still the Lord does not go so far as this; He supposes the poor man to have received an ὀλίγον of forgiveness, and therefore of love springing from it; and His design is by this word kindly to allure and

[1] Λέγω σοι is hence by no means to be separated, like a parenthesis, from οὗ χάριν, and the latter phrase to be connected with ἀφέωνται. Hofmann has briefly protested against this view: and we rejoice to find him holding fast the only correct interpretation. Quite as false is the subtile expedient on which Grotius prides himself so much, which connects the οὗ χάριν with ὅτι as its αἰτιολογικόν, and brings out this sense: Therefore, for this end, that she might thus love, has she been pardoned by God; shall I then reject this love?

[2] For we are not to suppose of this altogether heartless man, as v. Gerlach does, that an inward sense of guilt, and an impression of the wisdom of "the prophet," brought him, even for a little, near Jesus.

Hosted by Google

touch such souls even while rebuking them. And He designs us to understand that there is a measure of truth in this supposition. Whoever *imagines* that he has been guilty of *little* sin, and cannot from deficiency in self-knowledge place himself on a level with vile *sinners*, yet may, through that rich grace which takes hold of souls at every point of access, receive the *forgiveness* even of this little; and thus there will come a *little* love into his proud heart. Blessed will he be if he then take a close survey of the much love of others, and be thereby induced with deep shame to sink deeper into self, and receive for himself also forgiveness of many sins. The remark of the Berlenburg Bible is well meant: "Even he who needs little forgiveness, should on that account love the more, out of gratitude to God for having hindered and protected him from sinning, just as a man does a greater act of kindness who keeps another free from hurt, than one who heals the wounds which he has received." But this is not to the point; for Jesus is not speaking of what ought to be, but of what is: further, God does not reckon the little or the much of sin according to outward conduct; and whoever thanks God for preservation must at the same time acknowledge that all the many sins which have not been committed in overt act were really in him. We have to notice finally two important points. The one relates to the person of the Lord Jesus: mark how, in the case before us, He takes, with majestic simplicity, and as if it were self-understood, the place of God forgiving sins and receiving love in return; making the manifestations of love to His own person the measure of men's spiritual posture before God. The other relates to great sinners; who, after their conversion, feel inclined to do penance, and make confession, before the whole world, and glory in the compassion which they have experienced. To them it is here said, Only love much, this is the best confession and penance which you can offer. Only anoint the Saviour's feet in those of His brethren, that thus all who understand the matter may observe how much has been forgiven you. But as to others who do not understand it, and who would turn like swine upon you and rend you, spare them the special catalogue of your sins: auricular confession is due exclusively to the one High Priest.

Vers. 48–50. Now *finally*, after the poor host had received

Hosted by Google

the full honour (to him specially necessary) of the conversation held with himself, we have the long reserved word for the woman who was a sinner, who had already overheard much of a consolatory and commendatory character. Jesus had in the presence of all her despisers extolled and boasted of the great love of this deeply contrite woman, because she was able to bear this without injury; but He now goes, in His words to herself, into the very foundation of the matter, and that too, with equal publicity, in the presence of the whole party. He *assures* her formally and solemnly of her *forgiveness*;[1] and adds in conclusion a decisive statement in regard to its *foundation* and *consequence*. It is no longer "thy many sins," but σοῦ αἱ ἁμαρτίαι: the αἱ reduces at the last both to a complete level; and the emphatically preceding σοῦ excludes by a gentle contrast Simon, but at the same time allures him with the promise, "*I have* the same full comfort of forgiveness for all thy sins to address also to thee." Thus again He speaks boldly, more so than a prophet, as He does at Matt. ix. 2, to the man sick of the palsy; and is not afraid of the objection of ver. 49. (Which, however, on this occasion does not assume such a severe form as it did then, viz., of a charge of blasphemy against God.) In order, however, that all who hear the word may know the right road and the right end, He gives, in conclusion, the usual, simple, blessing upon *faith* unto *peace*. This concluding word here receives an expressive, all-embracing significance. In the first place, *faith*, the intermediate idea between forgiveness and love, has not yet been introduced; and by it, therefore, an answer is given to the question, "How is it that the one has been *forgiven*, and the other has not?" At the same time the misconception is removed, that love could be the prevenient reason for which forgiveness is received.[2] *Faith* in this case is pointed out as the internal principle on account of which God

[1] We cannot understand (the "*many* sins" previously mentioned, in particular, render it impossible for us to do so) that this could have been said to Mary of Bethany, "in a reference entirely unknown to us," as Schleiermacher supposes.

[2] Compare Sander, das Pabstthum, S. 48, where, after affirming the correct view, in entire harmony with the interpretation given above, he quotes the words of Melancthon: Christs interprets Himself, when He adds, Thy faith hath saved thee.

Hosted by Google

justifies, as the Lord does here this woman; *love*, on the other hand, as the outward expression and proof to others of the grace that has been given, as the Lord has previously shown. Further, the Lord says, in the mildest condescension of the simple Giver: Thine hand has given it to thee, because it has received it from Me. Still further, there lies here an allusion, which supplies the want of any previous notice on this subject, to the faith of the woman that was a sinner, before she saw Jesus and heard the word of comfort from His lips,—the faith by which she heard His call from afar and thus came seeking Him. She had already found favour with God in her repentance; her sins had been forgiven, and therefore she loved much. And we here learn that the sealing *assurance* of forgiveness is a different thing from the first forgiveness which had been enjoyed in penitent faith; although, again, every penitent wishes and seeks a special absolution, and shall assuredly receive it in the Word, as this woman received it directly from the lips of Christ. Still more, by thus giving prominence to faith, the Saviour directs the comforted woman to the future of the new life: Go on believing, and thus as all thy past sin has been forgiven (the language hitherto used had referred exclusively to this), so all thine indwelling corruption shall be taken away. Thou art *delivered*, thou hast been *helped:* the Lord says this to her exactly as He had said it to the sick whom He healed, as, for example, chap. viii. 48. Thou art *healed;* and thou shalt be healed, if thou continuest and makest progress in faith. In the eye of *justice*, the sinner was at first a debtor; now, before full grace, she is merely an invalid. Therefore *go* in the use of thy new health and strength; *continue not, in the enjoyment of sweet consolation*, thus remaining in *My* presence, and hanging upon Me. And this was needful, "for she would have forgotten to go home." Therefore, by this plain word, she who had just been comforted is directed to leave that presence which she had felt to be so pleasant, and to betake herself to her ordinary life, that she might by a new walk from henceforth continue to confess and to love Him. Thus she departs not only in peace, but truly εἰς εἰρήνην, *to the peace*, as to the happy termination of the way, the beginning of which is peace,—a termination, always near, yet for the first time fully reached only at the end.—Finally, the

Hosted by Google

Lord here attracts Simon and all who were present (in opposition to doubting questions and angry feelings, vers. 49 and 13), to believe in Himself, in order to their peace. But He approached the believing sinner, and gave Himself to her in these four symbolical stages: He first silently received her approach; then He turned upon her the light of His countenance; next He addressed specially to her the word of assurance; and last of all He sent her again into the world in the peace of faith.

DISOWNING OF THE ZEAL OF ELIAS. WHAT SPIRIT SHOULD YE BE OF, CHILDREN?

(Luke ix. 55, 56.)

The Lord enters upon His last journey to Jerusalem, firmly resolved to meet the sufferings that await Him there, through which He has to pass on His road to glory; and in the consciousness that the time is now very near when He must die at Jerusalem, and thus return unto the Father.[1] He takes the road through Samaria (chap. xvii. 11), a route generally avoided by travellers to the feasts; and in a spirit of kindness sends before Him open-hearted messengers to bespeak for Him a lodging, or to ask as a favour entertainment from some well-disposed

[1] Although this journey is a protracted one (see Luke xiii. 22, 33, xvii. 11, xviii. 31, 35, xix. 11, 28), and the Evangelist interweaves much that does not belong to it,—because, in a certain sense, the whole previous life of our Lord had been a journey to meet death,—the above is the correct sense of chap. ix. 51; compare xiii. 33. The expression ἀνάλημψις (on which Wieseler in particular has expended much subtilty) can, in New Testament usage (Mark xvi. 19; Acts i. 2, ii. 22; 1 Tim. iii. 6, etc.: it is used of Elias, 2 Kings ii. 10; 1 Macc. ii. 59; and the apocryphal ἀνάλημψις Μωσέως), only mean His *being taken up* from earth to the Father; but assuredly the passage through suffering is included (hence αἱ ἡμέραι), and the whole refers back to ver. 31. The remark of v. Gerlach is quite correct: "in this expression, death, resurrection, and ascension, are included, all in one." Christ goes forward to this ἔξοδος, not so much externally, by the shortest road, as internally, firmly resolved to meet it: πρόσωπον ἐστήριξε not merely as in 2 Kings xii. 17; Jer. xxi. 10; Ezek. iv. 3, xxviii. 21, but in the sense of Is. l. 6, 7.

Hosted by Google

people,[1] avoiding, as He was wont to do, places of public resort. But the Samaritans (mentioned here by St Luke for the first time) are not on this occasion so well-disposed as the inhabitants of Sychar had been: they refuse to receive Him. They feel aggrieved that He should turn aside to them on His very journey to Jerusalem. It was natural that at the seasons of the feasts, and in connection with the journeys to the feasts, the rivalry between Jerusalem and Gerizim should assume its bitterest form. When James and John, who perhaps were the messengers themselves or formed part of their number, perceived or discovered the refusal of the hated and despised Samaritans to give a night's resting place to the Lord—whom they had so recently seen glorified before their eyes—they gave way to anger and zeal; their intentions were good, and their faith was strong, yet their conduct was in violation of love, and they were actuated by the returning, persistent pride of the "We," which had recently been convicted in them, vers. 49, 50. They feel themselves insulted, with their Master; having come down from the Mount, they have Elias still in their mind, who punished, and that too in Samaria, the contempt shown to God in his person, by fire from heaven; they suppose that, as the disciples of Jesus, they are on a footing with Elias, that they may imitate him in the vigour of his zeal—a matter in which we are all most readily inclined to imitate the saints. All this is a very natural connection of thought. Further, inasmuch as they feel that it would not be seemly for them to say, "Call Thou down fire from heaven," they do not know very well what to do, but imagine that it would better become themselves to do it. Meanwhile they naturally ask first, Lord, wilt Thou that we say so? Singular mixture of daring faith, which does not doubt that the event will happen at their bidding; of simple presumption, which scarcely doubts for one moment that He will say "Yes" to their question; of a certain loving zeal for His insulted person, which alone actuated them as they thought; and, with all, in the concealed ground of a self-deceiving heart, of an impure pride, in the subtle working of which it was in reality more their own rejection than the

[1] This is all that lies in the text. There is not the least occasion to connect with these messengers the sending out of the Seventy, as Neander does.

Hosted by Google

rejection of the Lord that affected them. "They will not receive Thee,—most strange impiety!" they might think that they meant; but their heart meant, "They have rejected *us*: shall we then not be angry, and punish them? may we not for once do more than Thou hast commanded us?" (ver. 5). Thus they forget entirely the meekness of their Master, and His love for the poor souls of erring men.

The faithful and wise Master has immediately at hand a reply and a lesson prepared in most striking words—a reply and a lesson available in all similar cases, and for the sake of which alone St Luke has recorded the occurrence. It is inconceivable that even the first *word* of the reply should be a spurious addition. Many old *Codices*, however (and even the Fathers), actually leave out everything after καὶ εἶπεν; but it is hard to say for what reason, since some *reply* of Jesus must be conceived of at the time, and is necessary also in the evangelical record of the occurrence. This mere brief abrupt ἐπετίμησεν (He threatened them as He did the unclean spirit, ver. 42!) St Luke could not possibly have written; although that word of itself says a great deal, and certainly contains this, that He was more angry at their unseasonable application of Scripture, covering much pride and selfishness, than He was at the poor Samaritans. It partakes, according to His kindly manner which considers everything and pays regard to everything, of the nature of a decided and zealous *rejection* of their offensive zeal:—Far be it from Me and from you to seek or to say any such thing! The *lesson* which must reply to this example, drawn in to justify them, —*as Elias did*,—must take a wider range. "Elias then, and ye now:—what a difference! Do ye not yet understand this? What was quite right in him, is a sin in you. Do ye as My disciples still know so little? Do ye not know from My whole doctrine, actions, and life, that another spirit altogether than that which inflamed any old Testament prophet is in Me; and consequently of what kind of spirit (the disciples, children, possessors of what kind of spirit) ye *are*, as My servants and messengers, or ought to be?" That πνεῦμα does not here signify a certain state of mind and feeling, thus and thus constituted, is certain, because the word nowhere properly means this. As little may we understand the expression to mean (indeed, the

Hosted by Google

one sense flows out of the other): Ye do not know or reflect, ye are for the moment wholly unconscious, whether it be your own and an evil spirit, or the Holy Spirit, that impels you! For the φρόνημα of the flesh never means in the New Testament "a spirit of one's own," though we now make use of this inexact expression.[1] The οἵου before πνεύματος refers manifestly to the "spirit of Elias," Luke i. 17, and expresses by one pregnant and instructive word the great difference between the Old and New Testament economy, exactly in the sense of Rom. viii. 15. What Elias did was certainly not done in sinful wrath or in self-will; still with Me there has come a new time, and with it a new spirit. The spirit of *servants* was then altogether the right one, and it justified a burning zeal for the glory of the mighty *Lord;* but the spirit of the children of God introduces in gentleness the love of the Father as it appeared in the humble, patient *Son of Man.* A certain theology cannot, and will not, apprehend this difference of the economies of God; but the difference is well-grounded, and rests truly on most real unity. For example, we are told by de Wette: "that the Old Testament stands on low ground, that it contains in it views, aims, and ideas, which in part do not reach forward to those of the New Testament, and in part run counter to them." He is unquestionably right in what he says about "not reaching forward." But to what he says of "running counter" we have to reply, It is either not the Old Covenant as such which contains within it such ideas (as, for example, self-righteousness and the righteousness of works, views which ought not really to be imputed to the law as their producing cause), or we make false points of opposition, where we have merely the unity of development by different steps. Finally, however, this patient government of the world exists only in the middle portion of this world's history; the same severity which was prefigured in the judgments poured out on Canaan, Sodom, and the world before the flood, must again be revealed at the end of time in an inconceivably more terrible form. The burning and punishing severity of God in the Old Testament is as really seated in His being as are the long-suffering and patience which first became conspicuous in

[1] The idea is quite a wrong one, that our Lord directs attention away from the erroneously used *letter* of the Old Testament to its right *spirit.*

Hosted by Google

Christ, and had never at any former period been unrevealed. All the temporal judgments of the first economy are types of the last and eternal judgment,—to which the second economy points in language of more terrible import than had hitherto been used, —and they are still continued even in their typical character; the vengeance, for example, inflicted upon the Canaanites is repeated in the history of nations till the end of time. Unless we expound the New Testament in an effeminate and onesided manner, and unless we discard altogether the Apocalypse, the top stone of both Testaments, in which, in a manner sufficiently striking, when it announces the wrath even of the Lamb, the Old Testament judgments in all their severity return (see, for example, chap. ii. 27; vi. 9, 10; xi. 17, 18; xiv. 10; xvi. 5, 6; xviii. 6, 20; xix. 1–4), we cannot fail to discern the unity that pervades the whole Scriptures. Exactly so is it with the *legal zeal* of the Saints of God under the old covenant; then God demanded and practised righteousness in the punishment and destruction of His enemies. Impurity might, indeed, mingle with it; as, in the present day, carnal effeminacy and idleness may be mixed up with Christian love and patience. But in itself it was right and holy, like the wrath and zeal of their God, who desired at that time to reveal these His essential attributes. When the spirit which they had called upon them thus to act and judge, it would only be a misapprehension of this spirit to find in it anything false or human. Therefore the Lord in the passage before us by no means blames the deed of Elias in blaming the intended deed of His disciples. His saying, asserting the difference as well as the unity, is, Ye know not of *what spirit* ye now are. Diversified is the spirit; yet it is the one spirit received from God. Wrath is as truly in God as love is; although, in the grace of reconciliation, love prevails over wrath, and during the existing period of the Gospel stays its progress. The spirit of the fear of God is the very beginning of the spirit of adoption; the severe zeal of the law is, according to the relation of man to God, and the stage of divine revelation, quite as pure and holy as is pitying and interceding love. Elias was on the Mount with Christ, and John the Baptist threatened men with unquenchable fire, before Christ brought down from heaven upon the sinful people instead of this fire the fire of the Holy Ghost.

Hosted by Google

The words following from ὁ γάρ, which are still more frequently wanting, might possibly be an explanatory gloss added to the "few yet very significant words" of the Saviour; but, if so, the gloss is assuredly one which flows very naturally from the spirit of Christ, and is as perfectly in its place as if the Lord had really spoken it on this occasion. We cannot, therefore, decide quite as confidently as Olshausen does: "it is at all events a spurious addition;" for the addition, at all events very old (*Clem. Alex.* has it), sounds into our deepest soul like a word of the Lord, like an expression beautifully corresponding to the utterances which are recorded at John iii. 17, xii. 47. Even Schleiermacher would not agree with Griesbach in rejecting this gracious saying; and we venture to receive it as genuine. It corresponds entirely to the preceding clause, or rather it completely supplements it; it brings in what was really wanting, a decided allusion made for the first time to the person of the compassionate Son of Man, from whom goes forth the new spirit which does not act as Elias did; it gives the striking expression for the delivering, preserving, and redeeming *love* which was wanting to the disciples of the Lord in the present zeal of their faith. "Do ye not yet know for what *I have come?*" They had been driving too rapidly onward: Let fire fall from heaven and consume them! How opposite to this the tender compassion of the words which correspond to this, *The souls of men!* "Do ye not know what these words mean? What is each soul worth before God? Know ye that I am not Elias? I have come to *deliver, to preserve,* not to destroy, the souls of men." An old reading (the Vulgate also) gives merely ψυχάς. We prefer the full expression ψυχὰς ἀνθρώπων; it is the fit counterpart of υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου, and says more than either the mere ἀνθρώπους or the mere ψυχάς. It alludes to bodily life only in connection with the proper salvation of the soul: the Son of Man desires to let men live that He may give them *life.* Thus was Samaria spared for future salvation (of which the Lord here gives an indirect prophecy); and this same John must in due time pray down upon these Samaritans, in *apostolic* might, the gracious gift of the Holy Ghost.

Hosted by Google

YET A THIRD WORD TO A FOLLOWER: LOOKING BACK AT THE PLOUGH.

(Luke ix. 62.)

We refer our readers to Vol. i. p. 352 for our views as to the relation of time between St Matthew and St Luke. Both Evangelists relate harmoniously the utterances addressed to the man who volunteered, and to the man who was called, to follow the Lord. Although the "And He said unto another" of ver. 59, in St Luke, may be understood of the addition of a parallel saying brought from an earlier period, we cannot translate ver. 57 with Ebrard: And it happened among other things, *when, on one occasion, they were in the way.* This could be admitted only if ver. 52 and ver. 56 had not preceded; for though an Evangelist, especially St Luke, may be supposed to collect and unite different narratives, still he *unites* truly into one whole for the reading church, which, under the name of Theophilus, the guiding Spirit sets before his mind; and we cannot determine to draw a thick line between particular portions as if they were *disjointed* fragments. Hence, therefore, πορευομένων is truly connected with ἐπορεύθησαν εἰς ἑτέραν κώμην, and the definite article ἐν τῇ ὁδῷ denotes the way in which they then were; the Spirit of inspiration did not allow St Luke to write what would not have been true. The καὶ προσελθών, Matt. viii. 18, 19, is equally definite in the connection in which it there occurs (*this is not the case* again with the ἕτερος δὲ εἶπε of ver. 21); and there is no other way of explaining the facts except by assuming that according to the definite words of St Matthew and St Luke, the *first* of these examples really occurred a *second time.* Many suppose that it suits better a later period; we dissent from this, as the outward poverty of the Son of Man needed to be pointed out rather at the beginning, and must have been well known at the end of His course. But if the Lord, in consequence of having received a repetition of such an offer (and it is probable such offers may have been repeated more than twice), found it necessary to repeat His former reply (and that He should do so is in perfect accordance with His practice, frequently occurring

Hosted by Google

in the Gospels, of going back upon the past), the reply would in this case cease to be unsuitable for a later period. The second follower, and also the first, probably belong to this period. By this we mean not that they came forward in such close succession as they appear in the record (for the sacred writers are not so strictly exact in their histories as this), but that the events occurred generally about the same time; for, the command to preach the Gospel appears to stand in connection with the mission of the Seventy, which took place immediately after.

Enough, St Luke and also St Matthew (who is still more complete), show us that the Searcher of hearts employed different methods, according to the different tempers of the individuals with whom He had to do. The first man desires to follow Him, but there is something wanting at heart; he is therefore discouraged from his purpose. The second is called by Him, and is therefore ready, but in a critical moment he is irresolute; he is therefore drawn and urged onward. The third stands undecided, occupying a middle place between the two: he is neither discouraged nor held fast, but directed by a testing word to decide for himself: the Lord therefore addresses him not directly, but in a general statement. He requests, before following the Lord, that he may obtain permission *ἀποτάξασθαι τοῖς εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ*, *i.e.*, not "to bring into order *what* is in his house" (understanding the reference to be to things), or anything like "to arrange certain relations, some private matters, and still to have the charge of the house which he was about to leave." For, in St Luke, *ἀποτάσσεσθαι* signifies to *take leave*, or, what is connected with it, to give the *last* commission; see Acts xviii. 18, 21, and Luke xiv. 13, in a figurative sense. There are thus *persons* in his house; not exactly a father to be buried, but living relatives, inmates of the family, friends, from whom he will not and cannot be separated without taking leave. We doubt whether the man "desired to give a festive entertainment to the inmates of his house on taking leave, and to act like those senseless people who would rejoice with the world before taking leave of it and becoming pious; or like the children of folly who must first indulge in excesses before they bend the knee to the cross and turn their thoughts to the passion of the Lord." We find nothing so bad in the *ἀποτάξασθαι*, which rather implies a firm

Hosted by Google

determination to forsake all. Still, this leavetaking might easily give rise to a protracted stay at home, which might end in not taking leave at all. The Lord seriously warns him to consider this, neither forbidding him nor permitting him to do as he had desired. It has been said that the Lord makes use of the proverbial saying about the *plough*, because on the man's request there immediately occurred to His mind the similar request of Elisha, 1 Kings xix. 19, whom Elijah found and called when at the *plough*. It may be so; although the circumstances alluded to are the reverse of those in the present instance. Elisha was called away from the plough, this man was called to another plough. But though the Lord took occasion from this history to use this proverb, yet He must have had a reason which led Him to compare the call to the kingdom of God with the call to the plough: the figure must have meaning and truth in itself. We certainly are not wrong if we view it generally in connection with labouring in the great *harvest* (chap. x. 2); and further suppose that the Lord here speaks of ploughmen instead of sowers (the department of whom belongs certainly to the great husbandry of God as well as that of the other), because He desires to direct attention to the earnestness and anxiety which should characterise the careful labour peculiar to the first period, when the foundations are to be laid. It is the intention of the Lord to say to this man: In the Kingdom of God there is not mere pleasure and refreshment, not only easy and quiet work; but, above all things, and at every sowing time, a vigorous labouring at the plough—confessedly a work of the severest kind. There is labour within ourselves, labour on others; ever and anon the labour of repentance and self-denial, something new to plough, that there may be no sowing among thorns (Jer. iv. 3); it is ever necessary to break up the fallow ground of the world before we can plant anything that is good. For this work, there is needed a strong arm and foot, and also, immediately and especially, undivided attention, and there must be no such thing as looking back; for whoever looks back from the plough will make no straight furrows.[1] The "*looking* back" here alluded

[1] Reference has been made to Hesiod, Erg. ii. 60, where a similar expression is found: ἰθείην αὔλακ' ἐλαύνοι, μηκέτι παπταίνων μεθ' ὁμήλικας,

to, is not altogether such a looking backwards as that of Lot's wife, who looked back in absolute unbelief; and still less is it the turning round and the *going* back of 2 Pet. ii. 22. Both of these, however, may, and must proceed from it, unless we cease from the habit of looking backwards, from that attachment to what is behind us which throws all our work into confusion, and arrests all our progress. Besides—and this is the *immediate* sense of these far-stretching words—whoever at the *beginning* puts forth his hand, yet does not bring the *fixed regard* to the plough which he has laid hold of (but looks round upon his village and his flock), is not fit for the work. Thus we have a repetition of the warning, given at a later period; now in the middle of the great work, and after the full vigour of the first zeal was over, although thou withdraw not thy hand, yet if thou look back only sometimes, thou wilt soon make wretched, crooked work; thou wilt stand still altogether, yea, thou wilt stand at the plough as if thou wert working, while not working at all—not cutting into thine own heart, and therefore not into the heart of any other man. In the end it will come to this, that thou wilt throw away thy plough and return to thine own dear house, and sit down at thy former table. All this is not only designed for those special labourers in the harvest, whose office it is to make known the Kingdom of God; the conclusion εὐθετὸς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ is intended generally to declare that with such looking back from the labour assigned to each, whatever that may be, no man can himself come into the Kingdom of God, or remain therein.

ἀλλ' ἐπὶ ἔργῳ θυμὸν ἔχων. This is more to the point than the Pythagorean saying.: εἰς τὸ ἱερὸν ἀπερχόμενος μὴ ἐπιστρέφου.

Hosted by Google

THE MISSION OF THE SEVENTY.

(Luke x. 2–16.)

That the instructions given to the Seventy were probably the same as those which the Twelve received (at least in regard to their first journey), and were also conveyed in the same, or in similar words, is intimated by St Luke himself, inasmuch as for this very purpose he brings into notice, on the former of these occasions, only such instructions as were common to it with the second (chap. ix. 2–5). If, however, we compare Luke x. with the far-stretching prophetic instructions given to the Apostles in Matthew x., it becomes evident that the language used *there* refers to a permanent office for a future mission (the present being only a small typical one), yea, to a certain continuation of the office through successors for all time; but that here everything is limited to the present temporary mission of these Seventy. Hence there is repeated merely the first section of Matt. x. 1–15, the exposition of which, as already given by us, we do not intend here to repeat. Still, a single observation may be made. Between the two missions which St Luke has related in immediate succession, there lies probably a year, and that year the final one, in which the opposition had been gathering strength. Consequently in these second instructions we find, very naturally for the immediate present, that our Lord has special regard to the *rejection* of His message. This is seen, at the beginning, in the resumption of the "lambs among the wolves," applicable also to the first journey (see at Matthew x. 16); next in the greater haste (see 4); in the stronger representations of the threatened judgments (vers. 11–15); and, finally (ver. 16 which again is parallel with the conclusion in Matthew x. 40–42), in the *contempt* spoken of at the close. That the prohibition "not to go" into the streets of the Gentiles, or the cities of the Samaritans, is now *wanting*, admits of easy explanation from the altered circumstances; we naturally look back upon chap. ix. 52, according to which the Lord Himself wished to go among the Samaritans. Still further, it is obvious from chap. x. 1 that

Hosted by Google

the Seventy were not to go to the heathen: as this mission was a preliminary, temporary one, there was no need for such an expressly given commandment. Compare what we have said on this subject in Vol. ii. p. 5.

In other respects the progression and substance are very much the same as what we set forth in Vol. ii. p. 3 as characterising the first section expounded there. In the foreground we have, also on this occasion (ver. 2), the *necessity* which exists in the great harvest (as in Matt. ix. 37, 38) as the reason for this repeated mission (ver. 3),—a mission which, though it might be attended with equal danger, yet could not now be omitted; the "whence" and the "whither" of which are self-evident (Matt. vers. 5–8). Then the same negative *preparation* for the journey (ver. 4): they were to have no other protection against the danger to which, in the simplicity of their faith and fidelity they were to be exposed, than the taking nothing with them, and making urgent haste. The intimation as to how *they were to act* runs the same. At the *beginning*, when the determination of consequences is a matter with which they have nothing to do, general courtesy and kindness of manner, vers. 5, 6. In their *progress*, an unobtrusive discharge of duty (vers. 7–9), while they should receive the merited and promised hire without choice and change, and also without care. Finally, for the *termination* of their labours (on this occasion generally unfavourable) the same testimony of freedom from guilt and participation, after they should have fulfilled their duty (vers. 10, 11); with also (as at Matt. ver. 15) a glance at the judgment upon unbelief, repeated (vers. 12–15) in a stronger form from Matt. xi. 21–24. To this there is appended very suitably the general ratification of these and of all, even when they are despised, whom the Lord sends forth (ver. 16).

In ver. 1 the μετὰ ταῦτα (which according to Schleiermacher should only mean "besides," "moreover") points back to what immediately precedes, and the ἑτέρους only to the twelve, chap. ix. 1.[1] The mission of the Seventy falls quite suitably into a late period, the period, viz., pointed out in chap. ix. 51 as that when He resolved to go up to Jerusalem for the last time; it is a

[1] Not, as Schleiermacher thought, to the "messengers" of ch. ix. 52; for the Seventy were not sent merely to provide accommodation.

Hosted by Google

gracious effort made for the last time in opposition to the hostility of His enemies; a most perfect prelude and preparation for the last journey of our Lord Himself; a concluding testimony that the preaching of the approach of the kingdom of God was assuredly not a matter confined to a corner.[1] Even the expression ἀνέδειξε selected by St Luke (compare Acts i. 24) points to this; for, with the idea of choice, it contains also that of a public manifestation, in the present instance before the whole world. The *number Seventy*, standing in connection with the number twelve (compare Ex. xv. 27), corresponds to the Seventy Elders (Ex. xxiv. 1, 4; Num. xi. 16), and indicates as it were from afar an Anti-Sanhedrim of the new kingdom; in that case the round number 70 may stand for 72. The idea which has been frequently entertained that the *Seventy* refer to the seventy nations of the world (Gen. x.; Deut. xxxii. 8; Gen. xlvi. 27), according to the Rabbinical reckoning, and the *Twelve* to the twelve tribes of the circumcision, is false,[2] for the Apostles were rather destined for all nations, and the Seventy were certainly not sent to the Gentiles. Lange has recently affirmed, in favour of this idea, that St Luke "lays these Seventy disciples for the nations in the scales over against the twelve Apostles of Israel." We find, however, no trace in Scripture, or in history, of the Seventy being intended for the Gentiles, and the Twelve for Israel; we cannot bring the former into accordance with Luke x. 1, nor the latter into accordance with Rev. xxi. 14,[3] and certainly not with Matt. xxviii. 19.

[1] So also it was to the Seventy themselves a preliminary exercise of their faith, and of the confession of it.

[2] Our recent expositors find it very hard to shake off this supposition. Richter's *Hausbibel* starts with it as an uncontested axiom; Antfeld announces it without scruple in his sermon; even Neander did not decide against it; Hilgenfeld in his *Clementines*, however, protests, to our surprise, against "the axiom of modern criticism, that the *Seventy* owed their origin to Paul's universalism, and that the number points to the number of the nations of the earth."

[3] Even in Matt. xix. 28 it is manifest, as we there expounded, that it is only the people of God in general, as seen in the type of the twelve tribes, that is meant. St Paul belongs to this number of twelve: the reasons of opinion we gave, though there with too little positiveness, in our Reden der Apostel, i. S. 18-20. According to Munter (Sinnbilder der alten Christen), there are at most only twelve Apostles, inclusive of Paul; Matthias

Hosted by Google

Vers. 3, 4. We have already remarked that the danger incident to the second period, accompanied also the first mission. The substitution of the ἄρνες for πρόβατα (compare Isaiah lxv. 25. Sept.), appears not to have been accidental, inasmuch as this is the only passage of the whole New Testament in which the word occurs. It is intended to denote on this occasion the *simplicity* of the disciples along with their defencelessness (Matt. as *doves*), the simplicity of the *Faith in the call* (*I, your shepherd, send you*), and the abiding *faithfulness* to the only work assigned to them, that, viz., of proclaiming and bringing peace. This proclamation of peace on the part of the messengers and children of God is something better than all human courtesy. On this occasion *the greeting in the streets* is prohibited on account of the great haste; for these proverbial expressions, comp. 2 Kings iv. 29. If, however, we ask here what is the spiritual meaning of these words in a wider application, the reply is, that *purse*, and *scrip*, and *shoes*, denote all unnecessary helps which disturb the simplicity of faith in the Sender; and that the greetings, on the other hand, and according to circumstances, denote all unnecessary explanations in word or deed, which prevent dispatch in the discharge of duty. It may further be supposed, that allusion is made to all false courting of the favour of men or spending of their strength in mere words; only this is not exclusively referred to. The expression κατὰ τὴν ὁδόν, whether we translate it "in the streets" or "in the way," forms in both references a contrast to the *houses* and the *hearts* (children of peace in the house), which the Gospel seeks. Every salutation other than the message of peace is an unnecessary impediment, foreign to the object of the commission of the messengers of peace, and interrupting their onward progress.

Vers. 5–11. Everything here is nearly, yet not altogether, the same as in St Matthew's Gospel. It should be the duty of the Seventy to pay less attention to selection and inquiry, than the Twelve on a former occasion were instructed to do. Meeting a doubtful position with overflowing kindness, they pray for peace to every man,—without inquiring, "shall we find here the children of peace?" No doubt, this important difference

not being included as one. But if Paul belongs to the twelve, there is no opposition between the Twelve and the Seventy for the heathen.

Hosted by Google

was well grounded in the circumstances of the case. Further, in this instance they are expressly told merely to heal the sick; it is left to their own faith to determine whether they are to consider the demoniacs as comprehended among the sick. The peace of the kingdom of heaven they were not to proclaim in the streets, but preach it in the houses, and to the hearts of the people; and they should solemnly denounce judgments upon the city in which not one house shall receive them:—For this purpose they *should come out*. The second ἐφ' ὑμᾶς in ver. 11 is spurious.

Vers. 12–16. What the Lord had said on a former occasion (Matt. xi. 21–24), is repeated at a very appropriate place: I say to you no other than what I then said. The Lord remembers, very naturally, on many a later occasion, His own words, which He had uttered when His spirit was specially moved; yea, they are not His own words (as He Himself after the manner of men distinguishes), but the testimony of the Father, uttered by His lips, and therefore of sufficient importance to be recalled again and again. We may now look forward and observe how, after the *return* of the Seventy, He recalled the *consolation* from Matt. xi. 25–27. Thus two repetitions from the words spoken on the message of John, come together here at the close: first, the woe then denounced upon unbelief, and afterwards the joy at that time experienced over the faith of the children of Wisdom, then present. The concluding sentence, ver. 16, addressed to the Seventy, is designedly framed in the very same terms as that which had been addressed to the Twelve, Matt. x. 40; for it belongs to all to whom the Lord has in any way said, "I send you," in so far as this sending extends. And though they may be as weak as the Seventy are here, no man may *despise* their message; for the Lord who has sent them will let it be known that He judges the despisers of His servants.

THE RETURN OF THE SEVENTY: FALSE AND TRUE JOY OF THE DISCIPLES OF THE LORD.

(Luke x. 18–24.)

In order to draw a contrast full of meaning, St Luke, omitting the intervening narrative (compare chap. ix. 6–10), immedi-

Hosted by Google

ately anticipates the return of the messengers of the Kingdom, who, though generally despised, are nevertheless full of joy. With what strict fidelity do the purely historical Gospel narratives everywhere reveal the weakness of all the companions of Him who alone is mighty! the imperfection of the human nature, not yet sanctified by the Spirit, even of those believers whom He kindly acknowledges as His own, and presents to all Israel as messengers representing Himself! The *preaching* of the Seventy has certainly to a great extent been despised; whether or not they had ventured to shake off the dust of their feet as they had been commanded, they had been in cities in which they might have done this,—in many a Chorazin and Bethsaida which must have reminded them of the terrible *woe* of the Lord. Still they returned with *joy;* but what was the source of their joy? It was not because people had everywhere listened with pleasure to their preaching; because they had found so many children of peace in the cities of Israel; because so many had repented and were rejoicing in the near approach of the Kingdom: alas! this was not the report they gave to their Master! But—Even the devils are subject *to us* in Thy name! We have been proved, we have shown our power, and have obtained honour! The Lord beholds the return of that indestructible *we* of His disciples which He had taken so much pains, alas! in vain, to subdue. The Apostles, chap. ix. 40, could not cast out one devil, although the Lord had given *them* power over all devils, chap. ix. 1; the Seventy, moreover, had expressly received power only over diseases, chap. x. 9. So much the greater is the almost child-like joy (Neander finds only "childishness" here) of these lesser men over the fact that they had succeeded even in casting out devils. Although this had happened only to some of them here and there, yet each one, as he makes his report, takes the credit to himself; and the proud expression runs, *The devils are subject;* while they almost forget and do not bring sufficiently forward the name of the Lord, placing it after their own *to us*. What a striking and faithful picture of a state of mind and feeling, alas! not rare even at the present day;—of the *improper joy* of the servants at manifestations of power which have been effected through the name of the Lord, and which they have turned to their own glory.

Hosted by Google

The Lord, as was to be expected, directs to the true joy those who had returned to Him with this false joy. The discourse given by St Luke is strictly connected as far as the 24th verse; and the second part of it consists of instructive sayings looking back upon the past and repeated from what had been said on former occasions. In the first part, vers. 18–20 (to the middle of the verse), the Lord *discountenances* the false joy over the subjection of the spirits, the concluding sentences corresponding to the saying of the disciples. In the second, He *points out* the better, the only *sure* joy, the joy because of their own blessedness through and with Jesus their Master. In the first part, and before anything else is said, the subjection of the devils is declared to be not to *them*, but to the name of the *Lord*; in order, by the voice of warning, to discountenance the false joy which would appropriate this to itself, and which might by stealthy pride again seize the power which had been only granted, and forfeit true blessedness. "It is because Satan has himself already fallen, and has met with a still deeper overthrow since My coming into the world, that he and all his host have obeyed My name in your lips. But it is from Me that you have received power over him."

Ver. 18. The words of the Lord are full of majesty, and at the same time full of condescension. They start from the expression, used by the disciples but not sufficiently emphasized by them, "through *Thy* name." "Most assuredly, for how were it possible otherwise; why do *you* see in this so much cause for amazement and rejoicing?" "The victory of good over evil was a certainty to Christ as it were by intuition"—is the remark of a well-meaning expositor; but this is only partially true, and weakens considerably the real force of the passage. Not the evil element (τὸ πονηρόν) is what the Lord here refers to; for, in the esoteric teaching which He gives His disciples, He again expressly mentions Satan as a *person*, working in the possessed and vanquished in them. And, moreover, not only "as it were by intuition" does He know that Satan is fallen and is falling; but His expression ἐθεώρουν—I *saw*—is to be taken in its full deep meaning. To interpret the words "fall from heaven" as designating Satan's coming down to earth in order to resist and to destroy,—his augmenting and preparing his forces against the

Hosted by Google

kingdom of God,—is not only contrary to the whole biblical *usus loquendi*, but evidently incompatible with the context, according to which the only possible meaning is, It is natural and necessary, that he must fall before you and below you;—πεσόντα occurring thus exactly as a parallel to ὑποτάσσεται.—"*From heaven*" standing in the middle refers both to the lightning and the falling; but especially to the latter, as is evident from its being πεσόντα and not πεσοῦσαν. The figure of lightning, used as it is in connection with ἐθεώρουν, points to the sure certainty of the beholding (comp. Matt. xxiv. 27), and also to the quick decisive suddenness of what was beheld; but, inasmuch as it is immediately connected by ὡς with σατανᾶν, it contains at the same time a hidden reference to the bright character of an angel of light possessed by the fallen spirit when he was yet in heaven. And herein we find also the first answer to the question: *When* was it that the Lord saw Satan fall from heaven? Of course, then, first, when Satan first fell from heaven, before the creation of the earth and world; when the eternal Son in the bosom of the Father (as important, in this connection, observe ver. 22) was witness of this great and awful fall. The addition, From heaven *to earth*, is purposely not made; for what we now call earth became what it is through this apostasy of Lucifer. *This* is the primary fundamental force of the expression ἐθεώρουν; as is evident from the simple wording of the whole sentence, which cannot be interpreted otherwise so as to retain its full literal truth; evident, moreover, from the unmistakeable allusion to Isaiah xiv. 12 (where the king of Babylon is represented as a type of the original proud One who fell before him, compare ibid. 13–15, and Ezek. xxviii. 12–16, a still more distinct passage), forming in this connection a parallel to the words concerning the downfall of Capernaum, spoken before the sending of the disciples; evident, finally, from the warning, which is doubtless in the background: He fell by *pride*—be ye therefore humble.[1] They who think that the Lord is here speaking

[1] This thought so obviously suggests itself, that Erasmus unhesitatingly inserts it into his paraphrase: proposuit ipsis exemplum Luciferi, qui ob superbiam a tanta felicitate subito dejectum esset—insignis erat illius dignitas in cœlis, et tamen ob animi tumorem subito dejectus est a summis ad ima.

Hosted by Google

merely of a fall of Satan effected since the commencement of Christ's prophetic career, or of a new weakening and defeat of the enemy resulting from the mission of the Seventy,—are greatly mistaken, and overlook altogether the decisive words ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ.[1] We do not, however, limit the words of the Lord to the first beginning of the fall in the strict sense of the word; but presupposing that the Lord condenses into this great prophetic word, which looks both to the past and the future, the progression and consummation of this fall. For Satan's fall and loss of power is a process of long duration, passing through many gradations. His judgment recurs continually in an increasingly perfect demonstration, until the End comes; as is manifest from the remarkable passage, Rev. xii. 7–12 (which we cannot interpret here, but which in like manner speaks of what is still future by the type of what belongs to the past). That the old enemy suffered a new defeat by the few feeble exorcisms of the Seventy disciples, and that the Lord had beheld this victory, is the least important element, and scarcely referred to in the passage even implicitly. It is more suitable, not leaving these individual facts out of our consideration, to view the words in connection with the then near casting out of the Prince of the

[1] It is altogether against the simple natural meaning of the words to refer them only to a "significant *vision*," in which "the *final* violent downfall of Satan was represented" (von Gerlach). Even Neander, though he rejects, and quite correctly, every kind of "beholding in the form of a vision" as applied to Christ, yet finds here only a beholding in the Spirit, a seeing by a glance which anticipates the development of the *Future;* nor does he recognise that Satan appears here as one fallen long ago and therefore also judged. We rejoice to meet with the correct view in Hofmann's Schriftbeweis i. 391, who adds an earnest protest against the supposed foreseeing of a future fall, urging emphatically the Imperfect used in the text (not ἐθεώρησα or θεωρῶ but ἐθεώρουν). Yes, the Lord speaks here as a "Witness of what happened to Satan in the primal beginning"—speaks in the "recollection of a fact, of which He was witness, when He was God with God." *This* fall was an event of a moment, and different from the slowly progressing defeat of the power retained by Satan. Some see in our passage, by a mystical interpretation, the casting out of Satan, up to that time tolerated in heaven, but, since the coming of Christ in the flesh, cast out thence—(as most recently Voss in his Satanalogy [Lutherische Zeitsch. 1851], which contains much that is deep mixed with what is fantastic).—We make no remark upon this view; it may rest *per se* on good foundation, but we do not see it in this word of Christ.

Hosted by Google

World by the death of Christ (John xii. 31):—this had already commenced even then, for the devils left those who were possessed through the power of His person and name. To sum up all: In this short comprehensive word the Son says—"The whole long course of the enemy's fall, from beginning to end, is before Me as one downfall, decided and certain, even at this present moment."

Ver. 19. The second thought follows very naturally. "And even as I am with clear and full consciousness the Lord and Conqueror of Satan; so likewise have all who are Mine power over him, though this power proceeds altogether from Me as My gift. I did not give you this power expressly when I gave you your commission; but, since your faith, which as such I do not despise, but on the contrary reward, has gained this additional strength, *behold I give it* now unto you, and in future to all who believe in My name." The Lord enlarges the narrow conception of only *one* kind of power, as exerted by the δαιμόνια upon the possessed; He speaks of *all* the power (at the same time all power of the enemy's hosts, δύναμιν, חַיִל) of the enemy, —a power which pervades, to a greater extent than the Seventy could or we can conceive of, all nature and all creation upon earth, which is at present our habitation under heaven. The genus "*all the power*" is most significantly explained and exemplified by its two most striking species, *serpents* and *scorpions;* and this again is an allusion to Psalm xci. 13 (as is manifest from the expressions πατεῖν ἐπάνω), in which passage our commentary on the Psalms also points out the concealed reference to the powers of the kingdom of darkness. The passage Deut. viii. 15 is likewise remarkable, in connection with which the Jews have a legend that all the creeping things of the wilderness had to lie under the feet of God's people that they might walk over them. Compare the promise given by the Lord, before His ascension, to all believers, Mark xvi. 18; where the serpents are mentioned first in the list of poisonous and hurtful elements. If we were at home in the Scriptures, reading them aright with understanding, and if we were at home in nature, reading it aright in the light of revelation, we should learn from Moses what is the significant nature of serpents, and whence their present characteristics originate. And not only they, but everything which has affinity to them,

Hosted by Google

and to that death which by sin entered the *world*—all the base vermin and creeping things of the insect world which were not originally created—belong to this category; hence the *scorpions* are significantly added. "It seems as if Christ classified all hurtful powers under the domain of Satan,"—is Pfenninger's diffident remark on this passage; we do not hesitate to leave out the modest "it seems." Serpents and scorpions are the striking representatives of all that is θανάσιμον, *deadly*, in the animal world; parallel to the thorns and thistles of the cursed ground, in the vegetable world (comp. Ezek. ii. 6). Hence, the Lord refers concisely to all the hostile elements of nature, in which is the power of the enemy and the murderer. But this again, though the primary meaning is not excluded, is only an outward image of *all* evil power, specially spiritual, of all cunning, of all malicious, spiteful enmity: of all the perils which threaten us, though to a great extent we are in the midst of them without knowing it; and to which those, who are not armed by Christ, fall victims, whereas they who are furnished out of his armoury are *inviolable*, so long as they walk in faith.[1] But the most fatal violence or cunning is indeed that to which the Seventy were at this time exposed, in the midst of their joy of victory;—the temptation of pride. Satan would willingly see his δαιμόνια driven out and ὄφεις trampled under foot, if he thereby could find an entrance, as in the case of Judas, into the heart of the deceived victors. For he *who, in heaven, was as lightning*, became darkness when he fell, and changed to a creeping, malicious, spiteful *serpent* (which still retains something of the rapid lightning, and deceptive outward splendour). In the first saying the Lord pointed out that pride of the formerly glorious angel through which he fell;—in this He shows the wickedness of the enemy who, with cunning malice, is seeking to regain by stealthy deceit his former power.

Ver. 20. "That this enemy must be obedient to *you* arises altogether and exclusively from the power of *My name;* for it must needs be, that you bruise all his serpents by the name of Him who bruises the head of the old first Serpent. But do not *rejoice* overmuch on account of this. Rather rejoice that your

[1] "This is not so much a symbolical representation, as a concrete specimen of all that is hurtful."—Hofmann, Schriftbeweis, i. 392.

Hosted by Google

souls are rescued out of his power, and have obtained that salvation and heavenly blessedness which he forfeited for himself, and which he envies and hates in you. For it is *not* such a matter of course that *your names* should be accepted in heaven!" This, as was pointed out above, forms the transition to the second part, in which the order of ideas is the converse of that in the first. Our Lord begins by pointing out the only true object of great joy (the names in heaven, the persons of redeemed sinners written in the book of life); after this comes the encouraging *confirmation* of this salvation, exhorting to perseverance. This we heard in the thanksgiving to the *Father* for vouchsafing His revelation to babes, that is, to *humble* souls, as the contrast teaches us; in the testimony that this revelation is only through the *Son;* and in the pronouncing all *blessed,* who now hear and see aright the Son of Man,—a Bendiction which implies that all are exhorted to continue to see, and hear, and learn aright.

Satan is cast out of heaven, he exercises now upon earth his pernicious power, destroying both body and soul; but they who by humble faith in Him who has come to overcome Satan walk secure and unhurt, will be raised *to heaven* from earth's distress and struggles. The names of the apostates that depart from God are written in the earth, for the bottomless pit, Jer. xvii. 13; but the names of the redeemed are written in the book of life, which contains the names of the citizens of heaven. This expression, which occurs throughout the whole Old and New Testaments, indicates the divine foreseeing and merciful foreordaining of the inheritance of the saints and blessed believers, though not in the sense of an unchangeable predestination. In the very first instance in which the mention of a book written by God occurs, we read of a blotting out of this book, which is therefore viewed as a possibility: Exod. xxxii. 32, 33. Consult also Ps. lxix. 29, compared with Is. iv. 3, and Dan. xii. 1; and, in the New Testament, the passages Phil. iv. 3; Rev. iii. 5, xiii. 8, xx. 12, and (quite in accordance with this saying of the Lord) Heb. xii. 23. Hence it is possible for the Christian to know in faith, and to rejoice in knowing, that his name is written in heaven, even as it is possible to have the assurance of adoption and the inheritance promised. But we are at the same time to regard the fact itself as the chief, the most import-

Hosted by Google

ant thing; and to walk in humility, watching against Satan's wiles and malice, that our names may be found in heaven even unto the end,—fearing lest we ourselves fall *from heaven*, in the same way in which Satan fell. We are to give always all the honour to the name of the Lord, but seek the honour of our own name only in heaven before Him; not rejoicing complacently in anything else. The Lord changes the expression of the disciples, "the devils are subject unto us," into "that *the spirits* are subject unto you." Certainly He does not intend to say the same thing, though using a different term; but instructively enlarges the meaning, as we see above in ver. 19. There He placed in the foreground the hurtful and antagonistic elements in outward nature; here He glances into the whole depth of the spiritual world, where the πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας (Eph. vi. 12) are subject to the believer, thus furnishing the most perfect exposition of His former meaning. No possession of spiritual gifts, to the ascendancy of which even the great and acute *spirits* of the world submit;—no victories and triumphs over the strongest κοσμοκράτορες, even if a *Göthe* or *Hegel*, with all his genius and the whole host who offer him their worship, cannot prevail against him, but must in some cases admit his superiority in Christ;—can confer blessedness upon the Christian. In order that his name be really and remain written in heaven, something more is necessary than that it should have authority on earth; that it should be mentioned in books; that it should be recorded in every short compendium of Church history as the name of a man who did great things and made a great epoch. What is necessary, above all other things, is the humility and simple-mindedness of *babes;* the simplicity which, notwithstanding the performance of great things, remains little, and, undisturbed by earthly activities, constantly looks to heaven.

Vers. 21, 22. Now, ask yourself whether these words do not stand here in a connection as deep and internal as that in which we found them to stand in Matt. xi. 25–27;—in both instances with the equally distinct assurance that the Lord spoke them *at that time, in that very hour.* It is not other than a licentious liberty which pseudo-criticism takes when it expunges either of the two reports. It would, indeed, be incomprehensible, on the supposition of a real inspiration of the Evangelists, that the

Hosted by Google

Spirit of the Lord should have permitted them to give duplicates of such sublime sayings, with formulas so distinct and deceptive. Here again we notice in diversity, unity. It is natural that *the rejoicing* of Jesus does not occur in the account of St Matthew, where ἀποκριθείς points out a different connection. In his account the words are mere words of *consolation;* words of submission to the decree of the Father; the comfort with which the Son soothes and calms His soul before the Father when the anger of judgment was kindled in Him. But in St Luke there is expressed in them, in recollection of the solemn moment when that great saying was first given to Him, a real joy, increased by seeing that the little band of His disciples and messengers, whom He can endow with power against Satan, is increasing; and that thus the saying was fulfilling itself ever more abundantly.[1] The Lord Himself rejoices over His babes, notwithstanding all their weakness, against which He has just furnished them with the proper remedy; thus showing them by His own example, *how* and on account of what they *ought to rejoice.* The connection between these two verses and the preceding section is indeed deep and internal. We are not to look on the conquered devil, of whose lamentable fall the Lord Himself does not think triumphantly, nor on other spirits subject to us, with a joy, the character of which is doubtful and, strictly speaking, not without an impure element. But we are to look up to the eternal *Father,* before whom the wise and the prudent are confounded, with a joy which, forgetful of itself, loses itself in His praise:—in vain triumphing there lurks the truly pernicious self-praise. But we cannot know and see the Father, except in the revelation of the Son; consequently, to see the Son with the open eyes of faith, is alone and must ever be the true cause and object of joy.

Vers. 23, 24. The glory of the Lord remains hidden from the wise and prudent; for they have eyes and see not, because the god of this world has blinded their minds through proud unbe-

[1] It is a symptom of the healthy and well-ordered state of the soul of Christ, that on the same occasions He used the same words and had the same feelings in His soul. Inasmuch as with Him nothing depended on high spirits and low spirits, but He always thought, spake, and acted according to the truth. *Roos* die Lehre Jesu Christi (new Edit.) p. 337.

Hosted by Google

lief, so that they cannot see the glory of the true God in the person of the only begotten of the Father. (2 Cor. iv. 4.) But blessed are they who have eyes to see. There is here an almost verbal repetition of what is found Matt. xiii. 16, 17, doubtless in its right place.[1] It contains here a new truth peculiarly appropriate for the seventy disciples;—that He is able to say it unto them, as He said it before to the twelve, this is the progress in the joy of the Lord. But His word of rejoicing is likewise, finally, an exhortation to the disciples. They are said to be blessed, not merely on account of seeing what is to be seen in Him, but also because they should *listen* in future, and learn without wearying from the only Master what He reveals to us of the Father. Let us take this to our hearts; and with all Christ's babes, over whom He rejoices (is not this more than royal honour?), constantly and humbly look and listen to Him the only Master. This is better and more blessed than to endeavour to penetrate like Him into the depths of falling Satan, sooner or in any other way than He intends to reveal it to His babes.

WHAT SHALL I DO TO INHERIT ETERNAL LIFE? THE COMPASSIONATE SAMARITAN.

(Luke x. 26–37.)

How eagerly would the critics seize on this passage, and pronounce the question of a certain lawyer to be identical with the narrative contained Matt. xix. 16, only differently reported,—if St Luke had not himself subsequently narrated that second incident (xviii. 18)! This once more shows us that many things could naturally, and would necessarily, occur more than once in the life of Jesus. It is clear, that by the expression καὶ ἰδού the Evangelist does not intend to introduce the *standing up* (that is, his rising with the hostile intention of tempting, disguising his pride under a semblance of humility), and the question of this νομικός (comp. our remarks on Matt. xxii. 37) as suc-

[1] Here it says Prophets and *Kings*, in order to magnify the dignity of those, to whom the revelation of the Son in the flesh is vouchsafed.

Hosted by Google

ceeding immediately ver. 24.[1] Yet it is not without significance and truth, that the Gospel for the 13th Sunday after Trinity does not commence with the question of the lawyer, but includes the two preceding verses; thus pointing from the very outset to the grace which has appeared in Christ, which enables us to keep the law; and thereby leading us to the right understanding of the passage. This of itself refutes the strange paradox of Harms (Past. Theol. i. 69), which, though doubtless written with a good intention, is very incautious,—that "it is difficult to find in the Gospel of the good Samaritan a *Christian* theme for a sermon!!" Is it not possible for the Christian preacher to obviate, the foolish misconception that the narrative refers only to the general philanthropy of moralists? Does not the very introduction, which precedes it, prescribe this to him, even though he should not add a deeper exposition himself? But the introduction is not necessary for this purpose. Our believing preachers are almost as one-sided as the mere moralist, when they pass by rapidly the merciful Samaritan, who, it is true, has been often brought forward; and dwell on the seeing eyes and hearing ears (vers. 23, 24). Dräseke is superior to both, and shows the union and connection of the two parts: "after the blessing is added the condition." It is legitimate to connect in preaching things thus placed side by side in Scripture, and to treat the real, dogmatic connection independently of the historical. And thus when preachers represent the lawyer as if he had heard the words of vers. 23, 24, and as thinking or saying, "Now, let us see and hear, what new and great things thou canst tell us about the way to life eternal! Mere hearing and seeing cannot make us *blessed*, we must surely also proceed to doing, as we learn from God's word"[2]—they pronounce correct pulpit thoughts, which possess inward truth as far as *typical*

[1] According to Ebrard, the verses 21–24 conclude, according to the general plan of the Gospel, "the section concerning the *disciples;*" but this does not accord well with chap. xi. 1, xii. 1–12, 22, xvi. 1, xvii. 1–22, etc.; and surely the Evangelist did not write after such artificial outlines, introducing such formulas as: At that hour—He turned!

[2] Thus *Luther*, in the Hauspostille: "Surely this Jesus cannot preach anything better and higher, than what Moses taught. Hence, not only they are blessed, who see and hear thee, but also they who hear and keep the Law of Moses," etc.

Hosted by Google

history is concerned, although not founded specially on that particular *history*.

The truth in this remark is this, that the lawyer who was tempting Christ (ἐκπειράζων) spoke in a half ironical manner, and wished in his unbelief to try the Lord, what new answer He would give to the grand fundamental and central question. It is incorrect to say, or at least very uncertain, that he refers immediately to the preceding saying of Christ; nor must we forget that, with all the irony, there is also an element of earnestness, though unconscious, in the question, which bears in this way some resemblance to that of chap. xviii. 18. Indeed, if these νομικοί had not, over and above all their questions about doing and performing works, a question troubling them in their inmost heart, "What lack I yet?" then they would not have even taken the trouble of asking. It is this element of earnestness of which the Lord in His mercy seizes as a point of connection; He answers with earnestness the earnestness, which, notwithstanding all other elements mixed up with it, approaches Him with the great and important question. He tempts the tempter, but on His part it is out of fervent love; taking him at his own word, and leading him to give himself an answer, which surprises, and, at the same time, judges him. Compare, on the meaning of the question, which was probably common in the catechetical teaching of that time, and on the false interpretation of it, our remarks on Matt. xix. The Old Testament, consisting of the two grand divisions, Law and Promise, answered the question to this effect: Thou oughtest to do according to the Commandments, but as thou, sinful man, art not able to do this, therefore, beside and above the law, eternal life is promised thee as an *inheritance*. Though this was clearly revealed, yet the masters in Israel did not understand it; and this master here establishes by his ποιήσας the same false causal connection between doing and inheriting, which the other expresses more openly and fully by the word ἵνα.

Now, let us see how the true Master gives the true *answer* to the question; which, though starting with a misconception concerning the doing, points to the truth concerning the inheriting, viz., *What shall I do to inherit life?* In the first place, Christ refers (as in Matt. xix.) in general to the revealed *Law*;

Hosted by Google

since He also knows of no other "doing" but the fulfilling of this law; He puts the question in the most general way (ver. 26), and, after receiving a correct answer, confirms the sum of the law or the fundamental commandment of love to God, and to our neighbour (ver. 28). Upon this, when the lawyer, who is somewhat disappointed and struck in his conscience, begins to add sophistical questions limiting the commandment in order to escape the condemnation, which, he vaguely sees, is a consequence of not doing, of omission, Christ adds a special explanation of the commandment of love to our neighbour, by which our love to God is to be tested and to become manifest, but which fallen man can attain only by regenerating grace from on high, which begets in him new love to God. Christ gives this exposition in a *parable*, of convincing force, which strikes down every self-justification of the disputer, who has not experienced this love. The parable itself, to which is added a practical application, describes in a most graphic manner *active* love to our neighbour; in order to prove to the lawyer, how destitute he was of such love, and to show in the distant background the merciful love of God, which must *first help us*.

A man in distress requiring help, whoever and whatever he may be;—two men devoid of love, although priests and Levites, such as were at that time;—a man of active love, although a Samaritan! This paints distinctly enough the chief point, which is of central importance; and hence the application may follow immediately, exhorting to such love of our neighbour, a love general and free from all sophistical limitations, and showing the questioner the necessity of a regeneration of his heart and character. The simple concluding question (ver. 36) forces him to acknowledge the duty of universal love; whereas the powerful injunction added ver. 37, embracing both beginning and end of the plan of salvation, demands the fulfilment, which, however, is possible only through Divine grace—attainable even by a Samaritan, though he be without dogmatics.

Ver. 26–28. The law tells you what you ought to *do;* why then dost thou, a *νομικός*, who art well acquainted with it, ask me? What is *written?* it is open to all; *thou* readest it thyself, and *ex officio* readest it in the hearing of others. The remarkably simple *τί* of the first question does not render it necessary

Hosted by Google

to enumerate in the answer the 613 commandments, given to Israel by Moses; nor even "*the* commandments" of the Decalogue (as in Matt. xix.); but indicates and presupposes, *that* there is a sum of the law, a fundamental commandment, containing a short answer to the short question. Significant is the difference between this τί and the subsequent πῶς, which cannot be dismissed with a remark in the style of *Rosenmüller's Scholia:* Graecis interrogantibus saepe pro τί! What is *written* requires to be *read aright;* hence the question—*How* readest thou that which is written for the use of all? *How*—with regard to others, as it is your office and duty to be a teacher, searching the truth; how, moreover, for your own heart? This rabbinical formula of quoting a text, "How readest thou?" has a deep and searching meaning when used by Christ! It is because what is written is not read with simplicity and humble submission, that the Law, which is a schoolmaster to grace, is misunderstood and abused. The lawyer read correctly in this instance, as far as the letter was concerned; but he was unwilling to accept simply, and without artificial limitations, what is meant by with *all the heart* and by *my neighbour.* He does not repeat merely the first sentence concerning the love of God, the well-known שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל, as it is written on the phylacteries, and was read out in the synagogues morning and evening—but he adds also correctly the second chief commandment concerning love to our neighbour (which was *not* written on the phylacteries), and thus gives the same sum of the law, which the Lord Himself has declared to be the substance of law; comp. Matt. xxii. 37–40 (and our interpretation of that passage). It is possible that he had learned this in the school of *Jesus;* perhaps he arrived at it along with others by his own meditations. However this may be, the Lord commends his reply and says, "Thou hast answered *right;* thou well *knowest,* as I see, the law." Then after this is added, "But thou pronouncest thy own condemnation; as alas, thou dost *not* know." The man asked about doing, and yet he knew very well about doing; hence, he deserved, in the first place, to receive back his own word as an answer to his question—"Thou knowest the τοῦτο which corresponds to your first τί; then cease to ask the question, and begin the *doing!* Thus *thou shalt live,* even as Moses

Hosted by Google

and the prophets say (comp. our remarks on Matt. xix. 17, and add the passage there quoted from the Pentateuch, Neh. ix. 29; Ezek. xx. 11). God first answers man according to the question he puts; thus *tempting* him unto good by the law (Exod. xx. 20), that he may be prepared for the word of mercy by repentance. He who does not begin with earnest and honest dealings with the Law, never can or will understand and enjoy the Gospel. Is the physician to say to him, who imagines himself to be in health, Come, friend, let me heal thee? If he says to the lame man, Walk and run! he is not deceiving or blinding him, for his object and intention is to help him to health. *Do* this and *live*, are inseparably connected, it is true, and Moses is corroborated and ratified by Christ; the only question is *how* it is possible for us poor sinners to attain to that doing, which gives life and is life—whether by our own impotent endeavours, or by the Fulfiller who has come to us. Matt. v. 17, 18.

Does the lawyer feel it to be right that the truth of the assertion, easy enough to pronounce with the lips, "I love God with all my heart," should be tested by his love to his neighbour; and that he himself is far from truly loving every neighbour? He does not know it clearly, he does not feel it with submissive conviction; but he must have felt something of an accusation directed against him, because he endeavours to justify himself. Yes, he must have perceived *something* at least in the earnest and doubtful tone in which Christ surely spoke the words: "*Do* this—if thou art able! Thou hast not met thy obligation, *thou hast not done it!*" But according to human depravity he resists the confession of repentance, which begins to move in his heart, by the cunning of his lips and by the refractoriness of his reason; seeking excuses and evasions in order that he may remain a just man, by giving a different exposition of the commandments. The lie, which is brought forward as a cover and cloak, and which lies at the root of his question, is very well expressed by *Meyer:* "With regard to love to God—I, strict observer of the ceremonial law, am not defective; and with regard to love to my neighbour, neighbour means Jew or good friend—hence, as we interpret the law, have I not kept it? Or dost thou wish to give another, a new interpretation? Canst

Hosted by Google

thou think of referring it to him who hates me, whom I admit I hate in return—or to any stranger, in whom I feel no interest?" Indeed, the lawyer must have had a presentiment of such an explanation of the command; else he would not have fortified and defended himself against it by the question, which has the appearance of a wish for further information, but in reality shows his wounded sensibility and desire to resist. Καὶ τίς, *ecquis vero*, and indeed who then is my neighbour? This is a new question; dost thou know anything concerning this different from our teaching?

O how blind is the poor man, and how hidden from his eyes the true meaning of the great words, uttered by his own lips, ver. 27! How ignorant is he of the true "*love*, which begins with God, passes over to the neighbour, and ends in ourselves!" (*Dräseke.*) God, as all-sufficient to Himself, does not stand in need of thee; but as the all-loving, who loves all His creatures as Himself, He gives thee fellow-men instead of Himself, that thou mayest show to them thy love! To love God *entirely* is to love our neighbour; to love our neighbour *with the heart* is to love God. Such is the key which the introduction furnishes to the understanding of the subsequent parable; in which the Lord leads us into the heart of real life by a sketch which we cannot too carefully examine. Besides the chief object of His teaching, the very smallest feature and detail is executed in the most striking and suggestive manner. The parable goes into real life;—it is not abstract moralising, which leaves the heart cold; it is not premature teaching of dogmatics, which cannot open the eyes of the self-righteous blind. What Christ teaches in this manner is (to refute *Harms* again) as full of a genuine *Christian* character as is His new commandment of love; it accords manifestly with His first and last sayings (Matt. v. 43–48, and xxv. 34–40). But the Christian Pharisee cannot see his own heart (or the face of his birth, James i. 23) even in this clear mirror. They prove their transcendently wilful blindness, when, joining the general, fashionable, lamentable, misconception, they take the good Samaritan as the Shibboleth of their insipid hypocrisy-morality, of their "Doing" in which there is neither doing nor life—and besides of their pseudo-toleration, which puts aside faith.

Hosted by Google

The whole Gospel lesson which contains this parable may be thoroughly explained by the three questions occurring in it. The second of these questions, most characteristic of the narrative, *Who is my neighbour?* does not require an answer; for the word of the law, which speaks about the neighbour, contains the answer in the addition *as thyself;* according to Matt. vii. 12. As *no one* is to do any evil to me, so I am to do evil to none; as *every one* is to love me, so I ought to love every one. Consequently the question proceeds from an evil heart, which is not willing to know; and it is as foolish and perverse as it would be to ask, And what is meant by the word *love?* What is implied by the "*whole heart?*" What can be meant by the expression "*as* myself;" of course *not* as much as myself, but always *after* and subordinate to my dear self? The preceding counterquestion of the Lord, *What is written in the law?* is intended not merely to refer us to the Law, as if the Gospel was not necessary, but to lead us to a knowledge of our sins by the Law. *How readest thou* the Law? As a special pleader, looking for evasions and backdoors; or as a faithful subject in sincerity before God? If the latter, thou wilt likewise hear the promise; thou wilt read as a beggar reads the letter, in which he is acquitted of his debt; as the appointed heir reads the will. Finally, the first question at the head of the whole, "What *shall I do,* to *inherit* eternal life?" contains the answer in the very expressions of the question;—"Receive the inheritance offered, take hold of eternal life by faith in God's mercy; then shalt thou *live* and *do!*" But, moreover, the second question, which follows naturally after the first, receives hereby its answer; when the believer continues to ask,—What am I to do now, while I am living upon earth, in order to inherit certainly and fully eternal life? the answer is—Thou must advance in *doing;* and prove and manifest thy life of faith by thy love. In this sense, Doing is indeed the only and final test. (The fourth question: *Who has done this?* is, through the blindness of Christians of our days, in many ways not willing to see it—its own answer: *This man hath done it,* even should he be, or be called, a *Samaritan,* or anything else as regards his religion and dogmatics! Call not such an one an unbeliever, though thou canst not see his faith! If his love is genuine love—this re-

Hosted by Google

mains always the necessary supposition — he must have also faith before God, even true faith, which lives in works and brings forth life.)

Ver. 30. A *certain man;* some one or other—the very first word gives the complete answer, and shows who is our neighbour; while it is intended to call forth our sympathy, "*alas, poor man!*" There is no mention made of nation, tribe, rank, character, or the like;—as men we are related and owe to love one another. The Israelite smote his *neighbour*, Exod. ii. 13; and afterwards every man borrowed of his Egyptian *neighbour*, Exod. xi. 2. The stranger, that dwelleth with you, shall be with you as one born among you; and thou shalt love him as thyself, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt, Lev. xviii. 34.[1] The parable *may* have been a true story, as the names Jerusalem and Jericho seem to suggest. (Similarly Lazarus, ch. xvi. 20.) The road between the two places was indeed infested by robbers, and notoriously dangerous; however, there is no reason to suppose with Jerome that the wilderness Adummim was so called from this circumstance (or מַעֲלֵה אֲדֻמִּים, the bloody road), because the height had this name even in the time of Joshua (Jos. xv. 7, xviii. 17). Samaritans did not travel here frequently; hence, as ver. 33 is meant as a contrast, the certain man is probably a Jew; this follows as a matter of course, as he is said to *come down from Jerusalem.* At least such must have been the most natural supposition for the Priest and Levite who afterwards passed; though we cannot (as Lange does) assert this positively. Others have said, though with much less reason, that he was probably a heathen, for the priests would not have passed by a Jew;—thus mistaking the very pith of the narrative! But what he was is quite indifferent, and therefore remains unmentioned; nothing was to be seen in the man stripped of his raiment but a *man* lying in his blood. Thieves and murderers (comp. our remarks on Matt. xxi. 13)—alas such men, who *do* such things to men, exist upon earth; they

[1] Hence do *not oppress* the Jews at present, ver. 33. But do not make them, before they are truly emancipated by Christ, judges in Christendom, any more than the Israelites did the Ammonites and Moabites. This against the "good Samaritan-Toleration" of the Rhenish Landtag. (Some readers will know what this note of the first Edition referred to.)

Hosted by Google

were in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, even as now in and around Rome. Out of the heart proceed hatred and *murder*, Matt. xv. 19: another most important hint at the very outset. The murderers were *also* doers according to their craft: καὶ ἐκδύσαντες αὐτὸν, they stripped him; and because he probably defended himself a little, they struck him in anger, as if this in him had been injustice, and wounded him in sheer wanton cruelty. (Ἐπιθέντες not exactly *adding yet this*, but simply as in Acts xvi. 23.) Thus they departed and left him, ἡμιθανῆ, that is in the act of dying, who would have surely died had no help come; they do not even show him the robber's mercy of shortening his anguish. If the pious hearer of this narrative is disposed to bless himself inwardly at this stage, and say in his heart, "O, wicked sinners! neither such things, nor anything in the least resembling them, I have ever committed; I have never transgressed the commandment in trespassing against the body and life of a human being,"—behold two other and very different men appear on the stage, to shake somewhat this high opinion of himself. For, in Christ's Catechism, to do no harm or injury to our neighbour includes the offering of help and assistance in all distress.[1]

Vers. 31, 32. It is probable that many Priests and Levites travelled between Jerusalem and Jericho, the city of Priests,[2] on account of the weekly service, which was taken by them in turns; but, that a priest passed just in the moment, when it was still possible to save the dying man, was κατὰ συγκυρίαν, by a coincidence, as we commonly say. When the Lord uses this expression (it is His pleasure to make use of all words of human language, so far as they may be reduced to a pure meaning)—He means vividly to represent that this external event proceeded not from a directly expressed intention of God or of men. The miserable man was not brought before the door of the priest. Here, holy man, is a work of compassion and mercy; take him and nurse him! Not only he who is thus brought to me, or who himself appeals and cries to me for help (this poor man could

[1] Alluding to Luther's exposition of the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill!" (Kleiner Katechismus.)—[Tr.]

[2] Sepp, iii. 272, cites passages proving that it was the honour of that city to harbour many Priests and Levites.

Hosted by Google

not do so, but his lying on the road cried the louder to every human heart), has a claim on my active love:—the occasions and calls for active love appear often to be accidental; but God directs it so, and will require it of me, if my heart did not recognise in faith and love His leading and His hand in the coincidence. If the miserable man had been still able to see at that moment, he would have entertained some hope. But the priest, who had performed his temple service, and who was in no hurry (for it says κατέβαινεν) sees indeed the naked wounded man, but does not *do* according to Isaiah lviii. 7. If thou meet even an ox or an ass going astray, if thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, thou art not to forbear to help him,—thus Moses commanded, Exod. xxiii. 4; Deut. xxii. 1–4. How much better is a *man* than an ox or an ass? But the priest, who would have perhaps kept those commandments literally, forbears to help his own flesh; because he does not regard his neighbour, as the same Moses commanded him to regard him, as himself, but thought only of his *own* flesh. He does not care to know whether it is a stranger or enemy, or perhaps even a friend or brother; he is satisfied with the first glance. "This is a dangerous place!" is his first thought; the second follows soon, "God be praised that it did not happen to me!" Not so bad a thought, indeed, if he had only continued, "And what if it *had* happened to me and somebody was to go past as I am doing! Let me help him, as I in such a case ought to be helped." But he passed by. Did he "calculate in his loveless mind, that the sufferer was possibly not his neighbour?" It is not likely that he followed out such a long train of *reasoning;* for excuses always belong to the later date of theorising. Practice in the Present has quite other motives. "It is required, it is seen, by nobody"—God is nobody in the eyes of this priest—all their works they do for to be seen of men (Matt. xxiii. 5). If it would have made an *éclat* he would have done it; not as a work of mercy, but as an abomination of hypocrisy. If a thought of compassion stirs in his heart, he finds counter-considerations enough to stifle it. "He is too far gone, help is too late! What can I, single-handed, do with him?" (Indeed the priestly robe might have lost somewhat of its beauty and purity!) "What I ought to do is to make haste, lest I also fall a victim to these

Hosted by Google

robbers,"—and thus he passes by, and tells people afterwards, "I saw on my way a poor man lying on the ground; alas I *could* not help him, I thanked God for my escape, lifted up a fervent intercession for his poor soul, prayed and hoped that some one would come after me on the frequented road and help him!" Came that other one, indeed, but he thought, "If the first one did not help, he who is a priest, why should I do it, who am only a Levite, of whom it cannot be expected with even as much right as of my superior?" He was not only at the place, but came near;[1] possibly felt a little more compassion than the former; but he also only looked on him and *passed by* on the other side.[2] A human being on the brink of eternity;—what a sight for these two, whose duty it was to bring help even to the soul, and hence also first to the body. But *Priest* and *Levite* had become like the robbers; by their omitting to offer help, they completed as much as was in them the work of murder; if a third one had not passed by chance they would have sent the half-dead man into perfect death. Such were the men in Israel, who passed over the love of God and mercy to their neighbour (Luke xi. 42; Matt. xxiii. 23); and thus forsook the fear of the Almighty (Job vi. 14). Would you also be such an one in such a case? This is the question which Christ here presents to him, who questioned first. Thou hast the words of the commandment in thy mouth, and art seeking in thy sophistical thoughts to find out who is thy neighbour; but when he lies before thee on thy path, thou art neither able nor willing to find him! It is not knowledge, not dignity of any kind, not external worship, but only love, which is *doing;* and to omit the doing of good is doing evil—and herein alas many become like to evil-doers. Ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ Λευΐτης—the one gives the example to the other in doing, or rather not doing! Such are they who teach the Law and minister in the sanctuary; and what if they,

[1] Ἐλθών seems to be the right reading, and denotes progression; perhaps it contains also the delicate feature, that the Levite, more accustomed to external service than the Priest, examines more closely than the latter.

[2] Ἀντιπαρέρχομαι means, like ἀντιπάρειμι, in the first place, *ex adverso prætereo;* hence Grotius understands it in contradistinction to καταβαίνειν *contrario itinere* to Jerusalem. Others say: turning away to the *other side*, in order not to see him any longer or better. But in both cases we have ἀντιπαρῆλθεν; hence the intensified compound means *passed by.*

Hosted by Google

who preach the *Gospel*, and talk sentimentally about the good Samaritan, act in the same manner! All they whom you passed by here upon earth will lie in your way there, before the throne of the Judge.

Ver. 33–35. The active love of the Samaritan forms a significant contrast in every respect. The priest knows the sacred letter; he comes from the sanctuary and—has no heart! The Samaritan travels in affairs of business or something of that sort, but it does not fill up his soul. His *love*, which he finds at once time and inclination to follow out, is described by few but most powerful strokes, and forms a complete speaking picture. Moved with pity as to the Past, help for the Present, considerate care for the Future. If any one had witnessed it, he would have said, They surely are *brothers!* and, in truth, the Samaritan saw in the *man*, without asking who he was, his brother. How glad the half-dead man must have been, that then—a *Samaritan*, perhaps despised by him at other times, recognised in him a neighbour and fellow-man! It was good for James and John to hear this narrative (comp. ix. 54). If the history had not actually taken place, it must yet have been a possible event; it was *possible* that even a Samaritan, even a heathen, would act thus, and put to shame thereby the Jews. The Lord, however, purposely did not choose a heathen; partly not to offend His hearers too much, partly to castigate the national hatred against the Samaritans, who were, after all, partakers of the law of Moses and the hope of the Messiah. The Samaritan *journeyed*, whether from or to Jerusalem, or only across the road, is not told; because the emphasis lies on the circumstance that he came *there* in the course of a journey of urgent necessity.[1] *He had compassion on him;* though similar feelings may have stirred in the hearts of the Priest and Levite, yet it is only in his case that this feeling is thought worthy of mention; natural spontaneous compassion is of no avail, it increases the guilt if it prompts us to go out of the sight of misery. True sympathy ripens into act and help; this man forgets danger, business, everything, and thinks only of the wretched man before his eyes. The robbers, he

[1] Braune thinks that he was coming from Jerusalem, where he had again experienced how the Jews despised the Samaritans. This is, however, only a secondary thought.

Hosted by Google

thinks, may not come again; the short delay—short, for he helps without delay—can easily be made up afterwards. "Where can I get in this wilderness physician or medicine?" This question does not trouble him much. According to the custom of the country (Gen. xxviii. 18), he carries oil and wine with him. Oil especially is good for healing wounds (comp. Isaiah i. 6).[1] In general, we ought to think that the most essential necessaries for works of love are easily obtainable, wherever there is the earnest will. Without hypersensitive disgust he binds up the wounds and mollifies them. Soon the poor fainting man is so far restored that he could set him on his own beast (τὸ ἴδιον κτῆνος, on which he rode, sacrificing his own comfort to that of his neighbour); thus he leads him into the next πανδοχεῖον (this is the only sure instance of public inns occurring in the New Testament, comp. the Talmudic פונדק formed after this Greek work, and פונדקי from πανδοχεύς). The inference to be drawn from this is not that the poor man was a heathen, because these inns were chiefly intended for such strangers, who did not meet with hospitality in Jewish houses; but, evidently, that he did not expect or wish to demand from any of his friends to receive his charge. There was no other house, where he would have been received, except the public inn, where every one is admitted for money. *There he took care of him*,—out of love, not for the sake of reward, only for the sweet reward of love; one cannot tell who of the two had greater *joy*. *Now*, dear reader, be as sentimental as thou wilt; but only *in* doing and not without it. The next day he must continue his journey; so we must suppose, and thus this feature of the picture shows the boundary lines of different duties: it was not required of him to delay his journey altogether; for he had *done* what he *could*. Where there is no other friend or not even an host, we commit the completion of the work to the Lord as the Supreme Helper and Healer. But in this case there was an host, and he said to him—*Take care of him*; even as it is said of himself before that he took care of him. Thus he gave him first an example, before he asks it of him; not as people, who *only* throw open their purse, saying, I will pay him

[1] Oil relieves pain, wine stops bleeding. *Wetstein* cites a passage from Galen, in which oil and wine are mentioned as remedies in the case of wounds.

Hosted by Google

who helps here. And at the same time he does not demand of the host to continue the work of love freely and for nothing; he lays no burden on the shoulder of another, because he had preceded with a good example; but pays in advance two *denarii*, ample wages for two days' labour (Matt. xx. 2), though the host would probably not be occupied the whole day in tending the sick man. And, moreover, love makes him so prudent and wise, that, though possessed of such strong love himself, he presupposes nothing in the other but self-interest, specially in an host, who only calculates, *How much?* and who is introduced here as a man receiving pay for works of mercy, thus completing the picture of contrasting heartlessness. The Samaritan anticipates every possible scruple and objection that the expenses required by tending the sick might exceed the money given; and, lest anything should be withheld from the poor sick man, he promises—and after what he had done the host could depend on his word—"and whatsoever thou spendest more *I* will repay thee, as if it was for myself, when I come again." Thus we ought, and thus we may exercise love, if we have a willing love; it is perfectly compatible to *go on one's own* journey and yet not *pass by* the needy.

Ver. 36. *These three*,—viz., three *men*;—thus the Lord comprehends without difference under this name the holy magnates of Israel and the Samaritan, as opposed to the fourth *man*, fallen among thieves (whom he leaves to themselves and the judgment awaiting them). And now He puts a counter question as an answer to ver. 29; but very significantly the converse of that "who?" not, Who of them thought the poor man his neighbour? but, *Who was neighbour unto him?* Thus we are to put the question, in order to arrive always at the answer: Am I this man's neighbour? that is, Ought he to help me, if I were in his place and he in mine? "Neighbour" designates a reciprocal relation; for it is said "as thyself," Matt. vii. 12. The egotistic motto, "I am my nearest neighbour," is to be interpreted in the following manner: "Put thyself in the place of the other, and see whether thou wouldst like to be thy own neighbour;—exchange places with him, in order to love him as thyself!" Thus we may obtain in every case the rule of love from our very self-love; and thus the question of ver. 26 may

Hosted by Google

be put likewise, "What is written in thy own heart and conscience? who else is thy neighbour, but he, whose neighbour thou art, that is, every one?"

Ver. 37. The lawyer, put to shame, finds it impossible in his annoyance to say expressly, *The Samaritan.* But this makes his answer the more striking and to the point. *He that showed mercy on him.* That is, he whose compassion ripened into deed and truth; who did not only feel a compassion which he got rid of by an inward act of a positively evil character; who did not merely talk of his feeling of pity (ah! there lay a poor wretched man on the road; how it went to my heart that I had to pass him and was not able to help him!)—no, but who *showed* mercy. Without works there is no truth of love (1 John iii. 18); but without love of the heart no truth of works. If the robbers had seized the Samaritan before he was able to accomplish his design, his work would have been accomplished in the sight of God;—and if the Priest and Levite had given help on account of approaching spectators, it would have had no value. Dives may pay for the tending and nursing of fifty Lazaruses, or himself lick his sores à la Xavier, and "have his reward." Whereas if poor Lazarus sighed in his heart—"If thou, proud Dives, wast lying before my door, I would surely not leave thee lying there,"—his will is accounted to him as if he had performed it. But if thou art willing in thy heart, then go and do καὶ σὺ, also thou likewise, as now and then a Samaritan did; not as the passers by, who had time and opportunity (Gal. vi. 10), but no heart. Thus the questioner, by his first question, What shall I *do?* himself prepared the last answer now given him, *Do!* The Lord says ὁμοίως, as He used the same word in ver. 32. In the former case (ver. 32) there were two, in the present only one; the first *likewise,* alas! is of more frequent occurrence than the latter.—"*Go!*" There lies in this word something repelling; as if He had said, "Go away from Me; I have shown you now that you knew well enough the answer to the question which you put to tempt Me; learn a lesson from this, and know yourself differently from what you do now, and then come, to seek My mercy for your sinful heart." This is implied in the word for the lawyer. But for *us,* who know the Lord's mercy, it implies more. "*Go!*" Whither? Everywhere on our

Hosted by Google

path of life; wherever our journey leads us our neighbours throng upon us to demand our love; so that there is no need to go far to find them. Especially they who are wounded in their soul, who are dying spiritually; for truly to help *man* means more than to help and nurse the bodily life. Whatever rescues in this way, deserves to be called Asylum; whoever shows such compassion, shows that true and real and perfect full mercy, of which many a "sister of charity" knows only the proselytising caricature.

But he alone *knows* this who has himself experienced the mercy of *Him* who appears, as we said in the beginning, though only in the background of the whole parable, as the true compassionate Helper. As certainly as Dives and Lazarus are types of other persons (this will be shown subsequently) the good Samaritan is figurative of Him who shows mercy to fainting and dying man. Oil and wine and wounds were intended to remind us of Is. i. 5, 6, and the whole description of Ezek. xvi. 6, and similar passages. It is true that an attempt to interpret allegorically the individual details,—as, for example, the difference between oil and wine, the beast, the inn, the host, the two pence,—may easily degenerate into trifling; but spiritual Christians of all times have not been able to resist seeing in the whole parable a picture of man lying in sin and misery, whom neither law nor Levitical institutions can help, and to whom the mercy of Christ comes—Whom they angrily called a Samaritan. Luther and Melancthon cannot refrain from such a view; the former goes even into details, contrary to his usual principle. Only let us not argue falsely against this mystical import of the parable, which is dimly though really contained in its depths. This has been done with great warmth by Heinrich Müller (Erquickstunden, Ed. Nusswurm, Nr. 214), who says that from such a view it would follow, that Adam was only weakened, but did not become altogether dead, by the fall;[1]

[1] Luther also says, "wir zappeln noch ein wenig;" and Calvin (as Richter remarks on this passage) uses the expression *semimortuus*. And this is just as true as the "altogether νεκρός;" each in its own place. Calvin speaks of a revival of the *semimortui*, not only in connection with Isaiah lvii. 16, but in his Institutes; referring to our parable he says of the natural man, *Semivivus*.

Hosted by Google

that the law of Moses was to be blamed as not being willing to help; that Christ was justly called a Samaritan; that the lawyer could, if he liked, have done likewise, that is, could have been a Saviour and Redeemer of the world! Indeed, such ὑπόνοια is never amenable to so very rigid a criticism; but when we say, *Active mercy to him, who would be lost without it!* we have stated the simple *tertium comparationis*. The Lord could scarcely do otherwise than wrap up in the truth required for the occasion, and which in its first aspect is repelling, also the whole and full truth. *Thou shalt—love!* This perfect antithesis of law, which as law cannot help us from death, becomes in Christ vitalising truth, giving life to the faint spark of life. For, the only way in which it can be imagined that the word "thou *shalt* love" can produce an effect in him who is without love, is when I love him first in such a manner that he is ashamed, overpowered, and awakened to return my love. Now this is what the Lord does to us; and, *after* having done this, He gives His disciples the new commandment, "Go and do to others as I have done to thee!"[1]

MARTHA AND MARY. ONE THING IS NEEDFUL.

(Luke x. 41, 42.)

The simple reader of the Gospel will naturally suppose that the two sisters mentioned here are the sisters of Bethany, and not, as even Bengel was inclined to suppose in his Harmony of the Gospels, another pair of sisters who had accidentally the same names. Besides this, a closer investigation of John xi. and xii. discovers the same differences of character in the two sisters; and this short account of St Luke harmonises exactly in all its suppositions and deductions with the narrative of St John.

[1] Valerius Herberger treats the whole Gospel of the thirteenth Sunday after Trinity, as follows: "The *Outer Court*—Who are most blessed? They who see and hear Jesus; the sanctuary—Which are the holiest works? To do God's commandments without ἐθελοθρησκείᾳ; finally, the *Holy of holies*, our Friend and merciful Redeemer, who helps us to such works, and covers all our deficiencies."

Hosted by Google

That the certain village, where Martha received on that occasion the Lord in her house, must have been *Bethany*, follows necessarily from John xi. 1—thus excluding the supposition (which occurs in a work as late as that of Greswell), that the sisters had another domicile in Galilee. But the opinion that the short incident narrated by Luke belongs to that stay of Christ at Bethany which is mentioned in John xi., seems to me perfectly untenable; partly, because in that case St Luke would necessarily say something about Lazarus; partly, and this is of greater importance, because the whole scene, described here as a calm visit, does not correspond to the state of things which afterwards arose in consequence of the death and resurrection of Lazarus. But how are we to account for our Lord's being ἐν τῷ πορεύεσθαι,—that is, in the journey which St Luke is now speaking of,—so suddenly in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem in Bethany, and then far away again in Samaria and Galilee? We know that St Luke does not narrate details in strict succession; in his so-called journey-narrative he inserts sometimes also other events. He has thus inserted here this affecting and important occurrence, which may have happened, if not at the very close, yet at some other time when the Lord at the end of a journey to a feast had entered the house at Bethany.[1] And *why* here? Certainly on account of some real dogmatic connection; with the intention of giving a pendant and contrast to the question, "What shall I do," which had found its answer in the story of the Samaritan. Thus much seems certain to exegesis; but what is the intended meaning of the parallel must be decided by the individual perception and taste. For our part, we see something significant in the general contrast between the self-exalting lawyer and the reverent women; but do not regard the narrative, "as an actual exemplification of heartfelt love to God and hidden life in Him," corresponding to the doctrine concerning this highest duty, as given in ver. 27 (because the centre of the preceding gospel-lesson is not *this* word in the mouth of the νομικός, but the "*doing*" in the parable of Jesus). We would rather regard it as the intention of the Evangelist to

[1] Much may be said in favour of Lange's supposition, according to which this quiet visit of the Lord to Bethany took place about the second Passover Feast.

Hosted by Google

guard by this deep contrast, in its juxtaposition with the preceding parable, *against the misconception which even to this day clings to people's view of the good Samaritan.* Have not many believers, who wish to follow Christ's admonition, and offer to Him the loving service of many works of charity, lost themselves, on the other side, in a Christian πολυπραγμοσύνη, in an unquiet, self-troubled spirit which prevents the calm reception of grace? And is not the inmost fundamental thought of the word directed to busy Martha—a warning against such a tendency? *Do* was the word of the Lord in the parable; but now He says, *Rest!* Do not forget the "Seeing and Hearing" in thy much doing.

Martha, perhaps a widowed, at all events the older sister, to whom the house belonged, received Him into her house, and felt great joy in being the hostess of such a Guest. But her sister Mary did what was *better;* she also (καὶ—in this word St Luke sketches at once the whole situation) sate at Jesus' feet, to listen to His words, and to rejoice in her Guest; thus truly and wholly receiving Him who had not merely come into their house, but had also come to bring the bread of life to their *heart.* Opposed to this quiet παρακαθίζειν is the περιεσπᾶτο of Martha; the thought-scattering, busy going about to serve the highly honoured Guest with as many things as possible. Περὶ πολλὴν διακονίαν; the article τὴν is left out purposely, for she did not wish to be busy about things that were not necessary. But in the midst of her work, which she began with good intention, she feels an indistinct presentiment that her sister was enjoying more than herself the presence of Jesus (that she had the better part). But instead of turning from this feeling to a knowledge of her own fault, she envies and unjustly blames her sister. Martha also would prefer sitting at the feet of Jesus; but she counteracts this deep impulse of the Holy Spirit by her own spirit, which has chosen meritorious works in preparing and offering many things, and is unwilling to desist. She has a vague feeling of what would be right; but the opposition in her heart against this feeling only heightens her zeal, which breaks forth most artlessly in her words, of which every one lays bare the inward workings of her soul. Because she herself had no quiet and repose, Mary likewise must have none; what she herself has

Hosted by Google

chosen must be the right, and Mary must be very much wrong. So she takes at least so much time as to leave her work, and interrupt the Lord and her sister. *Lord,*—so she begins reverently, but soon becomes uncourteous, and afterwards actually rude to her great Guest. *Dost Thou not care?* (*οὐ μέλει σοι*; as Mark iv. 38, the strongest emotion of distress)—thus she would ungraciously draw Jesus Himself into her trouble and restlessness; presupposing in Him an interest in the many good things with which she intends to show Him hospitality. "That my *sister,* whose duty it doubtless is to assist me, *hath left me alone to serve? To serve Thee?*" What proud boasting is there in this *κατέλιπε,* viz., that she had begun and had performed the greater share of the work; she confesses that her sister assisted her in the beginning, but blames her in the injurious assertion that she is not doing anything at present, and that herself *alone* fulfilled the incumbent duties. Was then the Lord to be left sitting *alone* waiting their preparations, as if He had come only for the sake of their food? Martha cannot call away her sister quietly, for Jesus was speaking to her; therefore she must interrupt Him in order to set Mary at liberty. She does this boldly; speaks, in His very presence, as if it was then a culpable waste of time to listen to Him; nay, she even corrects the Lord's want of the proper *μέλει,* and dictates to Him what He ought to say. *Bid her, therefore*—(instead of speaking to her these words of edification, by which Thou keepest her unseasonably from her work), speak to her that she help me with my preparations! Are we doing injustice to Martha by this interpretation? Her intention was good, but she was as confused and disturbed, as we describe it:—and all this is a consequence of the unquiet of a soul which has much to do only about Him and His cause.

Martha, Martha! By this reiterated call He awakens and alarms her out of her busy confusion; and then addresses her in words so incomparably deep and penetrating that they have been inexhaustibly efficacious for all such souls as hers in every age—containing that truth which is able to save them from their error. "Without *need* thou causest thyself trouble and care for *many things;* on this occasion for more than is required." The *μεριμνᾷν* is the first and inward fault; it necessarily produces

Hosted by Google

the external τυρβάζεσθαι, the restless hurrying hither and thither. "I see that thou art losing all collectedness and calmness of thought in the zeal which scatters itself over πολλά; thou art thus spoiling thy good work, and losing the blessing of My visit." (Comp. Jes. Sirach xi. 9–11 in the original.) The Lord then adds ἑνὸς δέ ἐστι χρεία; and *ex vi oppositi* it cannot be denied that, in the first place, the ἕν forms a contrast to the πολλοῖς which are not necessary, and that it implies, therefore, a kind declining of the πολλὴ διακονία; quite in the sense of the old gloss, which, however, is wrong in not going beyond this first meaning: ὀλίγων or ὀλίγων ἢ ἑνός. Good *Michaelis* (it is necessary that there should be such exegetes, in order to counteract the hastily spiritualising and vague interpreters) is in the right, with his "single simple dish which the Lord finds sufficient;" as He is in the case of the temple-tribute and that of Cæsar. Even Basil, in one of his homilies, understands the word of the Lord as parabolically taken from the emblem of food. Bengel remarks correctly, Unum (ἕν, not τὸ ἕν) ad necessitatem victus, sine apparatu distrahente. Si referas ad frugalitatem hospitii, uberior, non modo non tenuior fit doctrina totius periochae. We also think that the sublime saying is torn from the root—out of which it grows, according to that condescending wisdom of the Lord which transfigures the external into a direct symbol of the internal—that the whole is divested of the familiar character and touching delicacy which contrasts so forcibly with Martha's impetuosity —if we do *not* see in the Lord's words this *primary* meaning, "Why are so *many things* necessary, good Martha, to welcome Me into your house?" Thus Martha most probably understood the words at first, till she heard what followed. For the sentence, "One thing is needful," stands *between two* sentences, the first of which proceeds from the many dishes, whereas the second evidently *passes over to the spiritual application*, and the middle sentence forms thus the medium of comparison, being applicable in both senses. That the Lord gave *merely* "a true, but at the same time, courteous answer, according to most delicate politeness," viz., that He was satisfied with few things, and even with one thing; and that St Luke wrote down under the influence of the Holy Spirit such a saying—can only be

Hosted by Google

imagined by *Michaelis* and such commentators; and a *Paulus* may picture it out complacently.[1] *Meyer's*[2] answer is not so much witty as natural and sensible: "If this be the only and true meaning, then to be consistent we must understand in the subsequent sentence (altogether overlooked by *Michaelis*) that Mary had chosen the best dish." Ἡ ἀγαθὴ μέρις (*now* the article is used and is significant) does not mean the better occupation, but indeed the true *food* which is *needful;* for this expression stands likewise in connection with the image suggested by the occasion. But the Lord appeals hereby parabolically and suddenly to the heart; and because Mary is willing to receive of Him, He says, "This is the food necessary for all human beings, also for *thee*, O Martha—*which I give!* (John vi. 27.) Did I come into thy house to be ministered unto or to minister?" (Matt. xx. 28.) At this stage the expressions πολλά and ἕν are seen in their real meaning, contained implicitly in the parabolic use; and Heb. xiii. 9 may be compared as an illustration of the whole. Observe, moreover, that the Lord does not reject the πολλά, for He accepts willingly that love which manifests itself in many things. Often many things pertaining to outward διακονία are required by the Lord, and it is praiseworthy to be diligent and careful in such labours (Rom. xvi. 6, 12)—but, notwithstanding, this thing, which is needful, always is and remains the one thing; what is superfluous belongs to the too "many things;" and what is of chief importance, what is blamed and reproved here is not the much labour and service, but the Μεριμνᾶν καὶ τυρβάζεσθαι.[3] Finally, as the Berlenburg Bible beautifully expresses it, "whenever spiritual things and temporal things are compared, temporal things cease altogether to be necessary." "That the soul be quiet and calm before Me, and listen to Me, and receive from Me that which gives and increases such quietness of spirit—this is the one

[1] Nachtigall (in Henke's Magazine vi. 2, 355) supplied ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου! *One* person is sufficient, you will be able to prepare the repast yourself!!

[2] Who has honoured the interpretation of Michaelis by a special refutation. Blätter, etc., iii. 383.

[3] Lange says truly,—If you find the thing *needful*, and live for it, you have found thereby and live for the *one* thing. The converse holds equally true, and is the primary meaning of the verse: The one central point is the only thing needful.

Hosted by Google

thing, the good part; Mary, in sitting here at My feet, hath chosen this; thou hast not done so, at least not at present, but hast neglected it and deprived thyself of it!" Thus the Lord, sheltering Mary, gives back the accusation to the accuser, and deservedly; and in conclusion, summing up all, opposes the strange desire expressed by Martha that her sister should be sent to join her, by the comprehensive word, "and this shall not be taken away from her." "Neither at present, as you would have it, nor at any other future time; neither from her, nor from any other who has *chosen* it; it shall not be taken from any, as long as they keep it and hold it fast." Whereas, the Martha-portion is a part "that can be taken away from us in a thousand ways, by poverty, sickness, old age, weakness, and who can enumerate them all?"[1] Nay more, in the end all who delight in working, and are happy in doing many things, must enter into quietness, though it be not congenial to them! It is also a correct remark, that μερίδα and ἐξελέξατο are placed together, denoting the communicated grace of God and the free appropriating act of faith. Likewise notice the great love and kindness of the Lord in offering Himself, and being so willing *to be chosen* (for spiritual communion with Him, receiving from Him, who gives Himself to us, is in reality that One Thing, which the One and only Jesus brings us); and observe that He blames only from pure love those who to their own loss move round about and near Him, instead of seeking, laying hold of, and enjoying *Himself*.

This may suffice as direct exposition. But in this case the reader may expect a fuller consideration and practical application of a word which in the course of centuries has proved of such importance to so many souls; and which has been so much quoted, justly or unjustly, for consolation and for blame. *Who is meant by Martha, and who by Mary?* The warning which is addressed to Martha has been sometimes also applied to the natural man, who, in the restlessness of earthly pursuits and worldly-mindedness, in the manifoldness of creaturely concerns, has much trouble and unnecessary turmoil, instead of seeking and finding the one thing needful, the salvation of his soul in

[1] Tholuck, in one of the three Sermons edited by Brachmann, in Bielefeld.

Hosted by Google

believing and in humbly following the Saviour Jesus Christ. This first application (to which the beautiful hymn of *Schröder* confines itself)[1] is by no means to be altogether rejected; for this application is indeed implied in the "one thing." But this is merely in the surface of the word, something which is indeed *presupposed* in it; this application, however, does not penetrate into the peculiar and real meaning of the passage. Martha and Mary are *both* disciples and followers of Jesus; and although it is not in the original of St Luke's gospel, yet the translation[2] has rightly interpreted, "Martha was cumbered about much serving *Him*." Jesus loved also Martha, as one of His believers (John xi. 5); for to take trouble about and in connection with Him is much better and more valuable than all the restless activity, or all the apparently peaceful slothfulness, of the children of this world. But it is not enough to be cumbered about much serving Him; *among Christians themselves* Mary is distinguished from Martha.

Here also we begin with the external. Like Martha are all those souls who, though they have come to know and love Christ, and even wish to *have* Him, yet do not take the right way of obtaining the good part. Busy with a zeal in which self-righteousness insinuates itself or is even predominant, they wish to *receive* Christ according to their own manner; that is, to prepare themselves many things for Him, thus serving Christ chiefly according to the manner of their former conversation;—their soul is wanting in that calmness without which it is impossible to obtain the full enjoyment and blessing which our Redeemer brings us. They get books, learned or devotional; they seek out works and services of many kinds; they try to obtain it by spiritual exercises, in communion and fellowships here and there. This also is one of the ways, and, alas, a necessary beginning for many, who, as we use to say, are sincere in their desire. But it is to such that Tersteegen says, in the spirit of these words of Christ: "Do not bind thyself so much to forms and outward methods. We must not be always *seeking* God, we must also *find* Him. As long as we are still seeking, there is much running and working: he who has found Him

[1] Beginning "Eins ist Noth, ach Herr dies Eine."—[Tr.]
[2] Luther's [Tr.].

Hosted by Google

enjoys and works quietly!" As long as they do not give up the πολλά of their running and working, their own seeking will stand in the way of their finding; as long as they are busy *round about Him*, they cannot come to rest *with and in Him*;—a rest which many a Mary enjoys, who, with deeper wisdom, chose from the outset the better part, and which is obtained by many a weary Martha, who, meekly receiving the exhortation of the Lord, joins Mary and sits at His feet (as, *perhaps*, was the case with Martha of Bethany). Thus, many a Separatist is still seeking with trouble and labour what the hidden flock is enjoying in that "Babylon" which he so much despises; many a one, running impetuously, finds fault with the quiet people of God, the meek ones of the earth; and yet they are in advance of himself, enjoying in a child-like heart that "one thing," receiving Jesus not only into the house of their outer life, walk, and works, but also into the home of their heart.

But we proceed to ask: Are we not all to be *active;* are we not to work both as regards ourselves and others; especially are we not to abound in works of mercy; that is, to serve the Lord Jesus, feed the Lord Jesus in feeding our neighbour who is His brother? Or, are some at liberty to sit down inactively with Mary in order to enjoy, while others are appointed to be Marthas, offering that service in many things which is likewise required?[1] It has been the opinion of some that both sisters had *equal rights* beside each other, as persons who had received *different callings*. So preached Dräseke, in the year 1824 (in after years he would not have expressed himself thus): "Each loves in a different way; but each loves aright, that is, according to her best understanding and capacity. The Saviour is pleased with both. Both desire, both possess, the one thing needful. Both desire, both possess, Him. He might have likewise added the converse, and said to Mary, 'Honour the busy house-mother. Martha also has her good part. She serves Me

[1] As the man who came to the abbot Sylvanus on Mount Sinai, boasting that he differed from the brethren who worked, "Mary had chosen the good part." He sat in his cell with his book, and was not called to dinner. The answer of the abbot puts, according to the then prevailing incorrect interpretation, Martha as representing work—"Every Mary must have a Martha." (See in the Altvater-Buch.)

Hosted by Google

out of love; even as thou, out of love, sittest at My feet, listening to My words.' Jesus recognises among His disciples every natural peculiarity and gift." Justly was this sermon criticised at the time in *Schwartz's Jahrbücher*. Yet there is *some* truth in the preacher's remark, as will be shown subsequently; although taken in this definite form it is exegetically altogether false. The Saviour does *not* approve of both, does *not* attribute to Martha likewise the good part. She would have freed herself from the blame—which refers not merely to her calling Mary away, but to her own conduct itself—only if, understanding the reproof of the Lord and humbly accepting it, she had left that one thing which she had prepared for her guest's refreshment, and had sat down at that table and feast which He had come to bring to her.

Who then is Martha whom the Lord blames? Such active, working, and labouring Christians as form a species between the self-righteous outside the pale of believers and the true disciples; in their active interest for the kingdom of God, using and urging all manner of organisations, machinery, and agencies:—that is, if they engage in all this with unquiet care and restlessness. Every Martha, whom God has called to be busy about many things, should, as Tersteegen says, do her work *calmly and quietly;* in order that the husbandman that laboureth be first partaker and *enjoyer* of the fruits, 2 Tim. ii. 6. *Every* Mary should have, not only the good part, but also her portion of active work; for—"Quietism is not of itself Mary's spirit." (Richter.) Paul working more than all the other Apostles, sits also and at the same time at Christ's feet; contemplative John is not inactive, but an energetic Apostle; "Christ, who constantly demands of us to be active in the kingdom of God, would not have approved of an exclusively contemplative life." (Neander.) From which it is clear that Martha and Mary should go hand in hand as true sisters; but so that Mary's spirit is the foundation common to both. "If understood aright, Martha had cause indeed to ask Mary's assistance, in order, namely, that her labour and works be sanctified." (Berl. Bib.)

Alas, it is here that we are so deficient. The new man is not able to continue always in the spirit of Mary. In our active works, even in our studying and learning, in our conflicts, and

Hosted by Google

in our very prayers, the temptation insinuates itself to fall into the restlessness of the old man, and to substitute self-made things for gifts bestowed from God. How are we to put an end to this constant conflict *between Mary and Martha?* Some propose as a remedy to distribute the two elements into *different seasons.* Thus, for example, it is said by them, when Christ came to Bethany to bless them, it was a Lord's-day for their house, and it was wrong to deprive themselves of this privilege by household cares and troubles. In like manner, Sabbath-days and work-days, Mary-hours and Martha-hours, alternate in our lives. "The Lord's words to Mary have this purport: Know the right point of time; and do not devote that which is set apart for learning the Divine word to earthly pursuits. I have come to teach you what is needful for you, and, instead of listening, you are troubled about the *meal!*" (Chrysostom.) This is not without its truth on account of our infirmity; but it does not detect the real sting of Christ's words, whose blame of Martha does not refer merely to the time chosen by her for her work. We are not to remain in a state of soul, constantly ebbing and flowing from Sabbath rest to the unquiet of works. Hence, is it right to say—Martha without, Mary within? The beautiful Moravian hymn on the subject is spoiled by the introduction of the common-place phrase that Martha is only the *body*, Mary the *spirit.* No, this can never lead to anything good: the spirit must be in a living vigorous body; the outward hand and the inward heart must not be separated in our doing. In short, strictly speaking, all Christians should have not the Martha-spirit (which is blamed, and must ever be blamed), but the Mary-spirit, and it alone in their heart of hearts; and even, though this be difficult, in the midst of Martha-work, and under all our obligations to being cumbered about "many things." Heinrich Müller (in his *Erquickstunden*) is anxious to rescue Martha, and therefore says: "Mary is faith clinging to Jesus, but active Martha is love." But by the erroneous title given to his essay, "*Always* at rest, and *never* at rest," he has himself shown that his exegesis is at fault, and has attached an incorrect meaning to the word *at rest.* Not her active work, but her restless unquiet mind, is what the Lord blames in Martha; *love* also must always be calm and at rest; for only that love is

Hosted by Google

genuine, through which *faith* is active. And, therefore, always and to the very end, it is Mary who surrenders herself from her inmost heart to Christ, loses herself, so to speak, in humble, undisturbed, child-like simplicity in Him, depends on Him for all and receives all from Him. She alone chooses, possesses, and retains that good part which is lost by Martha as soon as *she* begins her unquiet labour. But how difficult is it to be Mary! And into what depths of our spiritual life does this one word of our Lord reach!

If the severity of the word fills us with fear, let us descend from this culminating *point* of the meaning of the passage to find consolation in a secondary application, which has also its truth for us poor men in our actual state of frailty. It is evident that there was such a difference in character and natural disposition between the two sisters; that Martha could never become altogether like Mary. Consequently our Lord did not demand this of her, and would have accepted kindly the many offerings of her hospitality. But what the Lord reproves in the first instance, is her demanding that Mary should become like her; and her thinking that her way was the *only* right and true way of serving Him. Apart from this the Lord loves her; and leads her, accommodating Himself to her way, to choose at length thoroughly and entirely the good part, which, after all, she had not altogether lost, since she loved Jesus. Love is speaking, ruling, and deciding the conflict in Bethany; but it is the love and truth of the Lord, condemning the Martha-spirit, and yet not rejecting Martha. Mary never thinks of reproaching her sister, except it were absolutely necessary. She leaves it to the Lord. Ye, who are brothers and sisters before Him, prescribe not to the Lord what He is to say to such as differ from you! He does not require our dictation, but will say what is right in His own wisdom; what He says to *thee*, hear and accept; and in hearing and accepting it thou becomest a Mary—even though He had before called thee, *Martha! Martha!*

Hosted by Google

THE LORD TEACHES US TO PRAY, WHAT AND HOW: THE HEAVENLY FRIEND AND FATHER.

(Luke xi. 2–13 [Matt. vi. 9–13, vii. 7–11.])

In a certain place—in a village—on His journey; such expressions show that St Luke pays more regard in this whole section to a material (real) connection than to that of chronology or of any other kind. It does not fall properly within the task of the present work to investigate the plan and order of this gospel, of which we gave a specimen in the preceding narrative. Jesus Himself had been *praying;* and, moreover, as is evident from the whole connection of the terms, ἐγένετο, ἐν τόπῳ, ὡς ἐπαύσατο, in the hearing of His disciples;—one of whom has the courage to give utterance to a desire, which was doubtless shared by others (comp. vol. i. 220). "What *words* of prayer flow from the lips of our Divine Master, when He begins—so that it is necessary to wait till He *ceases!* We also ought, and we indeed would *pray* much and often, as He frequently exhorts us to do, but we are poor in words. O that we, His disciples, also had from our Master one or more *forms of prayer,* put by Him into our mouth, even as John taught his disciples." Such is manifestly the meaning simply expressed by them: *Lord teach us to pray.* And this request, as it really corresponds to a general want felt by all His disciples, is mercifully granted by Him. The present mouth-piece of the future Church does indeed attach too much importance to the outward word, as if in this way he could be taught to pray (a most important part of teaching, which had been neither forgotten nor neglected by the Great Teacher),—but when the Spirit was given, then the Church felt what is written Rom. viii. 26. We require not only to be taught *what* to pray, or the subject-matter and contents of prayer, such as would be acceptable to God, and in conformity to His will, which want is supplied by the form of prayer and promise given; but much more the καθὸ δεῖ in addition to the τί, the manner pleasing to God:—the true understanding, and right disposition of prayer. For this reason, the Lord answers the request of His disciples, as usual,

Hosted by Google

above what they could ask or think; and gives them not merely the former, but adds also the latter, warning, as was absolutely necessary, against abuse and misconception. We need not suppose that the disciple who asks the Lord had not heard the Sermon on the Mount; to how many things had the disciples listened, without either understanding it according to their Master's intention, or keeping it in their mind and applying it. But the Lord, who, according to St Luke (and partly also as we saw according to St Matthew), *repeated*, specially in the latter days of His prophetic career, many things taught by Him on former occasions—and, as was natural, particularly from the Sermon of the Mount, that short compendium of His doctrine, delivered at the outset of His teaching,—refers here with purpose and great significance to His former words, and illustrates and develops them only by a newly added parable.[1]

He teaches His disciples to pray *after this manner*. First, He tells them *what* they are to say, because they are in want, and whenever they are in want, of words;[2] that is, He tells them both what they may and ought to pray, and what are the best and simplest expressions for such petitions. Thus He repeats what He had given before; and appoints it on this occasion as a *standing form of prayer*.[3] But what is even the Lord's Prayer as uttered by the lips, if the heart does not *pray* it really, confidently, and with all assurance, *even as* dear children speak to their Father? Therefore the Lord proceeds to teach us, as much as this can be taught by words explaining words,

[1] We cannot but regret that even orthodox preachers repeat from their pulpits the opinion advanced in theological science, that the request of the disciple was the occasion of the words spoken, Matt. vi. (for example, Steinmeyer, Beiträge zum Schriftverständniss i. 119).

[2] But this is not to be called, as Braune does, "He made them pray this glorious prayer after Him." (Comp. i. 170.)

[3] Von Gerlach thinks this repetition improbable, "*because* in this case the prayer would have become a standing form for the disciples." We argue exactly in the converse way; Christ repeats the prayer, *because* He wishes to satisfy the right desire for a standing form. For, considering this want as felt by all saints, specially for their public services and fellowship, we must think that it was indeed Christ's object to give "a literal repetition of the prayer" for our sake. "If the apostolic Church did not use the Lord's prayer literally," Alford remarks, "*at what point of time* did this custom commence, which we find in every Liturgy known to us?"

Hosted by Google

the chief condition to be observed in using the formula:—*believing* perseverance on the ground of the Divine *promise*, that He gives to him that asks much more certainly and willingly than any man, friend, or father. This is the second repetition from the Sermon on the Mount, vers. 9–13; which is preceded, however, by a new parable, is applied and used as an exhortation to pray to the *heavenly* Father; thus giving new force and effect to the words of the Prayer itself.

Vers. 2–4. With regard to the omissions and abbreviations which we find in St Luke as compared with St Matthew, it is impossible to assume that everything which is wanting in the Codd. was left out by the Lord Himself on that occasion. In general we agree with Tholuck's remark: "As He had given the prayer as a model of a *short* prayer in contradistinction to the 'much speaking' reprehended before, it is unnatural to think that He inserted unnecessarily the three sentences, which are wanting in St Luke, and that He afterwards thought a rectification necessary."[1]

However, we do not apply this to all the three, or rather four omitted sentences; but draw an essential distinction between the introduction and conclusion on the one side, and the complete enumeration of the sacred *seven petitions* on the other. A certain variation in the expressions (which does not consist in abbreviation, but in change of words; compare the fourth and fifth petitions) corresponds to the whole character of Christ's teaching; and is intended to prevent any false cleaving to the letter of the form. We can understand why He might have omitted in the beginning the words ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς or even the ἡμῶν; He wished from the outset to lay all emphasis on our saying, with all our heart, "Father," as being the essential and deepest truth of this prayer, even as He concludes the whole section with this word (ver. 13). The reason why, in ver. 4, τὰς ἁμαρτίας is put instead of τὰ ὀφειλήματα was mentioned in our remarks on Matt. vi. (i. 238);—here we must observe that, with delicate accuracy, the expression ἁμαρτία is not used again in the second clause, treating of *man* trespassing against *man*. With regard to the *doxology* (concerning the genuineness of which compare our remarks on Matt.), the reason why it is

[1] Sermon on the Mount, p. 379.

Hosted by Google

omitted here is partly because, according to the ideas of that time, it belonged, as a matter of course, to a complete form of prayer; and partly because the *confidence* expressed in it is taught in the succeeding parable, which thus takes its place, and, as it were, calls it forth afresh from their memory. So far the whole is clear; but the *Lord* certainly did not omit in the repetition of the seven petitions any one; He did not take out any link of the perfect chain; hence, He did not leave out the third petition, which is a summary of all obedience, to be attained on the path of prayer, or the seventh, which is a summary of the redemption of the sanctified, and thus a condensation of the whole prayer.[1] However, they *are* omitted generally (and in the Vulgate); but are we to infer from this that "the reporter, whom St Luke consulted," did not communicate the words of Christ completely? We do not think so! For in like manner as St Luke knew well that Martha and Mary lived in Bethany, but did not *wish* purposely to mention it, so it is much more probable that, as a disciple of Christ, he knew the Lord's prayer in its complete form, when he wrote the Gospel; and it is impossible that he should have have had any reason or purpose for leaving out what is so essential. Nor was he a dependent copyist of what he found in any ἀπομνημόνευμα, which he consulted; but the true and last authority and reporter in all these consultations was always the Holy Ghost. Hence we conclude that Luke wrote originally the seven petitions completely; and the reasons why the two petitions mentioned were omitted so generally, and at so early a date, may form a subject for the critics to exercise their ingenuity to their hearts' content. Such is our mature opinion. If any one knows better, let him bring forward his arguments; but they must be more satisfactory than any which have been adduced hitherto.

Vers. 5, 6. A new commentary on the subsequent, "If ye then being *evil*—how much more *God!*" See in the subsequent verses the clearest comment, if such be still required, on these parables which—in merciful condescension, and with a truthfulness which conceals nothing—represent the highest love of the heavenly Father even in that (evil) yielding of man to impor-

[1] Bengel, in his *Gnomon*, for once passes over the question in a superficial manner.

Hosted by Google

tunity of requests. Comp. chap. xviii. 2. "Who among you has a *friend* (not to speak of any nearer relationship) whom he thinks and believes to be such, and will not use him and request his aid in time of distress?" This is the first question, to which is added the second: "And do you think that this friend will keep his door shut in such a case against his importunity and much asking?" The Lord Himself gives the answer, "Though he should not yield to the request out of friendship, yet he will do so, overcome by the urgent and importunate appeal to his friendship. Hence, what happiness—to *have* a friend!" This thought by itself is calculated to call forth in the disciples' heart the thought of prayer! "We have a friend and Father, a Hearer of prayer, a Redeemer, and deliverer from evil—in God in heaven! Are not men great unbelievers, who boast of this—and yet make so little or no use of it? To be willing to pray—this is of itself something; to be able to pray, to find true words of prayer, to find in one's heart to pray (2 Sam. vii. 27)—how difficult and hard is this! Are we so *suspicious* even towards fellow-men (who are yet evil)? The Lord in His wisdom describes a time of sudden and unexpected distress, which drives the one to ask, to the great inconvenience of him who is to give. About *midnight*, when the Orientals like to travel in the coolness of the night, a friend arrives late from his journey, and hungry; his friend and host has nothing in his house wherewith to refresh him, but he *has* his friend and neighbour, who must have something to help him. To him he goes; and, without many apologies, knocks loudly at the door, with the word φίλε: "*Thou art my friend*, and if thou dost not help me out of this present difficulty, I cannot believe that thou art my friend." He speaks as if the other must help him, without delay or hesitation; specially because he requests a favour not so much for himself as for one who is again his friend. Ἐπειδὴ φίλος παρεγένετο, probably without μοῦ (or with it, supposing it to be a genuine reading)—thus appeals to the community of friendship "It is for a common friend, for my friends must necessarily be also thine! Therefore, come now and give me, though it be midnight, three loaves (the Jews baked flat loaves, probably each was sufficient for one person). For, I must offer him one; I must, as is customary, eat one with him, or, at least, break it;

Hosted by Google

God.[1] For God gives, while in the parable the man is represented only as lending. This is the gift of the true *bread*, on which man properly lives, in the "give," of the fourth petition (ver. 3), most truly interpreted. If any feel inclined to play with the words of wisdom, they may imagine that here are the three breads of the three following petitions; although this is not to be called exegesis. Ὁ πατὴρ ὁ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ. This turns back to the preceding address, ver. 2, supplying what was there omitted;[2] and conveys to the hearts of the disciples the assurance, "Ye are not like the children; can ye not pray?" In the transition to what alone remains, as spiritual need, the limit is also pointed out where an apparent denial of our prayers directed to earthly objects is the best answer.

[1] We do not, however, by any means, understand that the scope and connection positively demand something definite, corresponding to the figure,—the Holy Spirit as the food of the soul; and consequently that the indefinite expression ἀγαθά at Matt. vii. is a generalizing of the original expression, as Neander supposes. We rather find a prayer for the Holy Spirit to be in accordance with a later period, and not in harmony with the Sermon on the Mount.

[2] Here observe: When we address God He is ὁ πατὴρ ὁ ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς, and, when He answers us, He is ὁ πατὴρ ὁ ἐξ οὐρανοῦ (Alford).

END OF VOLUME THIRD.

Hosted by Google